

"An insincere and evil friend is more to be feared than a wild beast; a wild beast may wound your body, but an evil friend will wound your mind." Buddha

Betrayed

By: Deans Darling aka Aandune

Chapter 1 - Betrayed

Harry smiled as he walked the four blocks to his flat. "*It will be good to be home,*" he thought. He had been gone for six months on a mission for the Ministry and had decided that he had had enough of saving the world. Upon completion of his assignment, he had handed Davis Millson his resignation and no amount of cajoling, begging, pleading or inducements swayed Harry from his decision.

The aurors were charged with keeping an eye on Death Eater activity. Since Voldemort's death, at Harry's hands, most had been captured. Unfortunately, the ministry had been forced to let some of them go because there wasn't enough evidence to warrant keeping them locked up.

Some had actually been under the Imperious Curse, but far fewer than the actual claims to that affliction. The Death Eaters that had actually been cursed were allowed to go free, and return to their homes to try to live out their lives in quiet obscurity.

On the other hand, those that had escaped justice by subterfuge and trickery were closely watched. Teams of aurors kept close tabs on these Death Eaters. Some aurors even infiltrated their ranks.

Slowly the Death Eaters began to mass. This in and of itself was enough for the Ministry to take notice.

The Death Eater's plans were to take over the wizarding world, one country at a time; gather followers with each attack, and absorb them into an ever growing circle of loyalist, thus creating a single, international cell lead by a pure blood wizard by the name of François DeBonier.

DeBonier was the French equivalent of Lucius Malfoy. When Harry killed Voldemort, and Lucius Malfoy was imprisoned, DeBonier took it upon himself to take control.

Eventually, Harry was called in because the problems that DeBonier was creating could not be ignored any longer.

Just before the attack at the German Ministry, Harry was able to capture DeBonier, quietly arrest him, and spirit him away. His followers were none the wiser. Without a leader, the Death Eaters floundered. The attack was launched, but with the uncertainty of DeBonier's disappearance, the Death Eaters botched the plan. DeBonier's followers were summarily re-captured, re-arrested and quietly brought back to trial.

Harry testified at DeBonier's trial and was present at his execution; thus insuring this time, there would be no escape.

Now he was home! A full week earlier than expected. He had decided to walk and enjoy one of the all too few beautiful days in London. For once the sun shone brightly.

He chuckled at the extent that Davis went to; to keep him from quitting, but Harry would hear none of his protestations.

Harry had plans. He had a beautiful wife waiting for him and if he had anything to say about it, they would soon have a child on the way. He knew that during their four year marriage he had been away more than he had been home. Now was the time to make it up to her.

He stopped at the confectioner's shop to buy chocolate strawberries that Hermione loved so much. He stopped at the winery, picked out the finest bottle of Dom Perignon.

He continued to walk, and he chuckled at the surprise he knew would be on her face. She would scold him for not letting her know that he was coming, then she would throw herself in his arms and kiss him. Just the thought, made him quicken his pace.

He didn't dare apparate in the middle of Muggle London, so he hurried along.

He climbed the stairs to their third floor flat and keyed the pass code to the front door.

When he walked into the living room, it was dark because the curtains were pulled tight. He shrugged out of his jacket and laid it across a chair.

His heart was beating fast as he approached their bedroom door. As he did so, he heard Hermione giggle. He smiled and thought that she must be talking on the phone. But in the next moment he also heard a man chuckle.

Harry's brows knitted together and pushed open the door. In an instant, his world came crashing down.

"HARRY!"

"Bloody Hell!" Ron muttered as he scrambled from the sheets to untangle himself.

Harry was barely aware of the bottle of wine hitting the stone hearth and shattering; or the bag of strawberries that lay scattered where he dropped them. He turned and ran from the room. He heard Hermione yell "Harry! Wait! Please!"

In a moment, Harry was back down on the street running. He didn't care about the spectacle he made of himself. He didn't care where he was going. He just ran until his lungs gave out. He bent over and put his hands on his knees. His breath came in short gasps, but he wasn't sure if it was from the run or the shock.

He looked around and saw a bench and he threw himself into it.

He didn't know how to feel, he didn't know what to do, and he definitely didn't know how to deal with his life that was suddenly over. He wouldn't cry! He wouldn't give them that satisfaction.

Then she was there. "Harry?"

He growled at her. "How did you find me?"

“You always come here when you are upset. Harry, I....”

“Don’t Hermione! I don’t want explanations or lame excuses. I don’t want you here! Just leave!”

“Harry, please – talk to me.”

Harry put his elbows on his knees and looked at the ground. “You’ve already said all that needed to be said.” He stood and began walking away toward the Ministry of Magic.

Hermione hurried to catch up with him. “Harry, I’m sorry! You never should have found out like this.”

Harry walked in silence, so Hermione followed trying to get him to stop and talk to her. She was answered only with stony silence.

He entered the phone booth, pulled Hermione in after him and punched the required numbers and announced to the disembodied voice “Harry Potter and Hermione Granger-Potter to talk to Vincent MacDuff in the legal department.”

“Thank you and have a pleasant day,” The magically enhanced voice intoned.

As the floor began to drop, Hermione looked at her husband in shock. “Harry, you can’t be serious!” She grabbed his face and turned him toward her. “Harry...?” But as she looked in his eyes, his stare was dead and dull.

He pulled out of her grasp and exited the lift and made his way down the corridor to the door that read Vincent MacDuff, legal affairs. He pushed the door open and held it for Hermione. When she showed no sign of stepping in, he grabbed her wrist and forced her into the room.

The room was graced with floor to ceiling bookshelves; stocked with books and parchment rolls stating wizarding law.

The secretary, a pretty blonde haired, blue eyed witch of about thirty, sat at a desk situated in the middle of the room. When they came in she looked up and smiled at Harry.

“Hi Peggy, is Vince in?”

Peggy smiled, but then looked at Hermione who had tears pouring down her face. Peggy’s smile faded as she looked from one to the other. “Ahh, yes, Harry, go on in.”

Hermione looked pleadingly at her husband. “Harry, please don’t do this. We need to at least talk about it.”

Harry ignored her and knocked on Vince’s door. Peggy had warned him that Harry was on his way because he opened the door with a look of concern.

“Harry, Hermione, please come in.” Vince indicated two chairs in front of his desk.

Harry took the proffered seat, not waiting for Hermione. “Vince, I want a divorce.”

Vince glanced at Hermione and noted the tears. “I take it the feelings are not mutual?”

Hermione shook her head and continued to wipe the tears falling of their own volition.

Vince turned back to Harry. “Maybe we should talk about this Harry –” Vince sighed “– you don’t want to be too hasty.”

Harry bolted out of his chair. “Hasty? I’ve been away for six months, keeping the world safe from Voldemort’s Death Eater’s. Every moment I wondered how Hermione was. I thought about her; worried about her; prayed for her. Finally, finally, it was done. I come home...and find her in bed with Ron! With RON, Vince!”

Vince barely avoided letting out an amazed whistle, only because he was too professional to do so. He looked at Hermione’s back, and shook his head in disbelief.

Harry continued to pace. “I came to you because I knew that you could get this through quickly and quietly. I don’t want a media circus.”

“Harry, are you sure that you want to do this? Maybe counseling...?”

“No Vince! At the risk of sounding melodramatic, I’ve been treated badly all my life! I’ve been abused, threatened, publicly ridiculed and humiliated. But through all of it I had my friends and loved one’s behind me! But now I find that I am not even allowed that little bit of solace.”

“When the people that I love start doing the same thing, I draw the line.” Harry put his hands on Vince’s desk and leaned forward and looked directly at him. “Either you do this for me Vince or I find someone who will!”

“Harry, please....” Hermione started, but was silenced by his glare.

Harry looked at his colleague, completely ignoring his wife. “Well?”

With a sigh Vince began to pull papers out of the desk. “You’ll have to divide your assets you know.”

“The only thing I want is the vault in Gringotts, that came from my parents, my broom and my clothes. She can have everything else. I will pay the rent on the flat until she remarries. Merlin knows that Weasley wouldn’t be able to afford it.”

Hermione gasped. “That was uncalled for, Harry!”

Harry spun on Hermione. “Did you ever love me Hermione? Or was it just convenient to have me pay the bills: so Weasley could fill – other needs! Is this why you encouraged me to become an Auror?”

Hermione’s eyes narrowed and she swung her hand to slap him but he caught her wrist preventing the contact.

Vince cleared his throat. “Hermione, are the terms that Harry has set acceptable to you?”

She jerked her wrist out of Harry’s grasp and dropped down into the seat and nodded “Yes. Give him what ever he wants. Let’s just get this over with.”

“Well then, since this is uncontested, it will only take a couple of days to....”

“No! Vince I want it done now. Do what ever you have to. I’ll walk the papers to where ever they need to go myself.”

Hermione was angry now, and she glared at her husband. “Oh, no, Harry! The wizarding world’s Golden Boy shouldn’t have to take care of his own divorce papers. Give them to me, Vince. I’ll take them myself.”

Vince shook his head. “No, we usually ask petitioners to wait a few days to cool off....”

“I won’t be here in a couple of days. Give me the papers to sign now. Then owl me when it’s done!”

Vince shoved papers toward him with a sigh and showed him where to sign. “Are you sure, Harry?”

He looked up at Vince with the first show of emotion since this started. His eyes were bright with unshed tears, but his voice was hard and cold, “I’ve never been so sure about anything in my life! Thank you, Vince.”

He stood and held his hand out to Vince and the two men shook hands. “Where are you going, Harry?”

Harry shrugged his shoulders. “I don’t know, Hawaii maybe; somewhere far away.” Then without a backward glance, he left the room – and Hermione.

Harry used the floo network to return to his flat and collect his belongings. When he arrived, Ron was pacing. When Harry saw him, his eyes hardened. “Oh, you’re still here. Don’t worry, Weasley; I’ll just gather up a few of my things; the rest is yours; including my wife!”

“Harry, where is Hermione?”

“Don’t know, don’t care!”

“Harry, I don’t blame you for being angry....”

“Well isn’t that just peachy, Weasel. Isn’t that just benevolent of you! You and Hermione play house together while I’m gone, and you give me permission to be angry. If I were you, Weasel, I would step aside and let me get my things before I hex you to the hell you deserve!”

Ron winced at the rancor in Harry’s voice, ran his hand through his hair and sighed. “Harry, listen to me, please.”

NO! There is nothing – do you hear me – nothing you can possibly say to me to make this better. You were shagging my wife. I am stepping aside with as much dignity as I can muster; which at this point isn’t much. I’ve already signed the divorce papers. The two of you deserve each other.”

Harry walked to the bedroom and avoided looking at the bed as he gathered his belongings. “Accio suitcase!”

The things he had gathered flew to the case and when it finished, closed with a snap. He grabbed his broom, shrunk it down and headed out the bedroom door. There he met Hermione.

Her eyes narrowed. “It pays to have friends in the Ministry!”

In the most sarcastic voice he could manage he sneered. “I suppose I have to have friends – somewhere: There certainly aren’t any here! Have a great life!” He stepped into the fireplace and with a bit of floo powder said, “Diagon Alley!” and he was gone.

Chapter 2 – Re-thinking my life

Two days later, Harry was laying on a beach in Hawaii, soaking up the sun and sipping on a large frosty drink as if he hadn't a care in the world. He alternated from watching the large tropical birds float on the cross winds and considering ideas on vengeance. That was when a shadow fell across his face. He opened one eye to see what it was, and groaned. "What are you doing here, Malfoy?"

"I might ask you the same thing, Potter. Wasn't it just a week ago that I left you in Germany?"

Harry only grunted and lowered his sunglasses.

"So, where's Granger?"

"Gosh Malfoy, I don't know: Probably out shagging Weasel."

Harry had his eyes closed so that he didn't see Malfoy almost choke on his drink. When he had somewhat regained his composure, he climbed over the top of Harry's legs, pushed them off and sat on the foot of the chair. "Whoa up there, Potter." He looked at the two girls that he had had on each arm, "Sorry ladies make yourselves scarce. I'll catch up with you later."

Without opening his eyes, Harry muttered, "That wasn't necessary. You aren't staying. Do ya mind Malfoy? You're blocking my sun." Harry took his foot and pushed the blond into the sand.

"Damn it, Potter!"

"Look, if you insist on breathing the same air as me, grab one of those other chairs."

Malfoy picked himself up making sure to brush the loose sand onto Harry and dragged another chair closer. "You know, you're ugly when you're pissed. OK, Potter, what happened?"

Harry snorted. "Like I'm going to tell you!"

“Hey, I’m your partner, who else is willing to laugh at your sordid tale of woe?” The blond smirked. “The Weasel and the Mud Blood huh? I could have told you that one, Potter.”

“Who said I needed or wanted your opinion?”

“Oh c’mon Potter, spill, this is just too good to pass up. No, wait! I’ll tell you what happened. You came home all ready for a long, romantic romp in the sack, but they had started the party before you got there – am I close?”

Harry didn’t answer. He just laid back and kept stubbornly quiet.

“The Golden Trio falls apart at last. Yeah, I think I like that!”

Harry sneered at him without opening his eyes. “I’m gratified that my pain is so satisfying to you. Leave me alone.”

“Not on your life; I’m staying until I get answers. Like, why the hell are you in Hawaii and not at home fighting for what is yours, wimp? Why aren’t you at home kicking Weasley’s teeth in? Are you really that much of a martyr, that you are going to come crying all the way to Hawaii to get away from them?” Draco looked disgusted.

Harry opened his eyes and studied him through his dark sunglasses, then came to a decision. “Fine, Malfoy. You want to know what is going on. I’ll tell you. I’m re-thinking my life. I’m thinking that I should have accepted your friendship back when I was eleven. I’m thinking that two-thirds of the trio should have just dropped off the face of the Earth a long time ago. I’m thinking that with friends like that, I’d have been better off if I had let the sorting hat put me in Slytherin.”

Draco was silent as he looked at Harry.

Harry lifted his sunglasses and looked at his rival. “This is a first, Malfoy. You? Speechless? Mark this day down in history. Draco Malfoy is at a loss for words. You look like a fish out of water. Close your mouth, it’s very unattractive. If I had wanted to see your tonsils, I’d have asked.” He signaled the waitress and ordered two drinks.

When the waitress returned, and handed the men their drinks, Harry raised his. "We are celebrating, Draco!" Harry reached down and picked up the paper packet that had been delivered to him several hours earlier. He threw them into Malfoy's lap. Draco set his drink down and opened it.

He studied the papers for a while then looked up at the raven haired wizard. "These are divorce papers, Potter!"

"Right in one."

"That's it? They play hide the wand and you make it as simple for them as filing for a divorce? You really are a wimp! Who'd have guessed!"

"Yeah, and what would you have done, Malfoy? Oh wait, I know, you would have put the Cruciatus Curse on them."

Draco shook his head in mock sympathy. "I'm really sorry for you, Potter. You really have deluded yourself into thinking that there is good in everyone. One of these days, you are going to realize that very few people are good. If they try to make you think otherwise, they are hiding something."

"That's a really warped opinion, Malfoy."

"And yet, here we are! You sitting around all mopey and letting your former best friends keep doing it to you over and over again. I'll say it again, Potter; you are a wuss!"

"Go ahead and amuse yourself, Malfoy. Think what ever you want. I just don't care." Harry put his glasses back down and lay back in the chair again. Then he started to chuckle. "It's all very Arthur-esque actually. Weasley is my Lancelot, Granger; Guinevere and yours truly stars as the King. Only in this version, the King doesn't forgive."

Draco waved the papers. "You pushed this through pretty quickly!"

"Yeah...why wait? How many times have you told me to use my influence? Well, I did."

“You might have a change of heart. It’d be just like you.”

Harry snorted. “Not likely. We’ve worked together all these years and it is amazing how little you know me.”

Malfoy looked at the papers again; dropped them in Harry’s lap and shook his head, more to himself than to Harry whispered, “This is perfect.” Then louder, “Ahh – Potter, I’m having a party tonight in my hotel room. There will be lots and lots of luscious island beauties, and plenty of liquid refreshment. You interested?”

Harry looked at him. “When and where?”

“The Hiatt Regency; suite 1248, 9:00 o’clock.”

This time Harry’s laugh was genuine. “A Muggle hotel? You?”

“Yeah, I felt like slumming. So, see you tonight?”

“Maybe!” Then Harry pulled his sunglasses down over his eyes again and settled back in his beach chair effectively dismissing Draco Malfoy.

Chapter 3 – Good morning sunshine and other songs

Harry groaned. “Argh – what have I done to myself?” He grabbed his head to make the room stop spinning. He pushed himself slowly up, getting his legs under him to stand. With a moan, he dropped into an over stuffed chair and winced on impact, then closed his eyes willing the room to stop spinning, his stomach to stop churning, and his head to stop pounding.

He sat for a moment in silence then heard close to his ear, “Good morning, sunshine!”

“Damn, Malfoy!”

Draco chuckled. “You don’t handle alcohol very well do you? I’ll have to chronicle that away in the ‘how-can-I-make-Harry-Potter-miserable’ file.

Harry only groaned to Malfoy’s delight.

“What was that we were drinking?”

“Volcanoes! They’ve got a little bit of this and a little bit of that. Here drink this.”

Harry cocked an eyebrow. “What is it?”

“Poison! But after what you did last night, I doubt it will kill you. It *will* however make you feel better. Snape taught me the potion.”

Without another thought Harry downed the contents in the vial. Surprisingly, he soon felt like himself again.

“Wow! That stuff is great. You could make a bundle by selling it.”

Draco rolled his eyes. “Yeah maybe, but ingredients wouldn’t exactly pass the FDA’s seal of approval.”

Harry looked around and took in the decided lack of people and the major disarray of the room. “Where’d everybody go?”

"I sent the last of the girls' home an hour ago." Then Draco laughed delightedly and pulled another weapon out of his 'kill Harry Potter' arsenal. He waved his wand and intoned, "Scourgify! By the way, I didn't know you could sing."

Harry's eyes got wide, and then he buried his head in his hands. "Oh, don't tell me!"

"'You're The One That I Want', from some show called Oil or Grease, or something like that. One of those lubey words, anyway." Malfoy waved a hand in dismissal, then laughed.

Harry groaned. "I said *don't* tell me!"

"'How To Handle A Woman', that one is from *Camelot*. I have actually seen that play. You do know that you don't sound anything like Richard Harris, don't you? Dumbledore, now HE does a great Richard Harris impression."

Harry growled. "Malfoy!"

"'When I'm 64', The Beatles!"

Harry looked disgusted. "You're enjoying this."

"Too bloody right, Potter! How often do I get to torment The-Boy-Who-Lived, hmm?" Draco laughed.

Harry shook his head. "Can I use your shower?"

Malfoy was still laughing and pointed. "Down the hall, princess!"

After forty-five minutes, Harry came out of the bathroom toweling his hair.

"That explains it!" Malfoy looked up from the television program he was watching. "Potter, I'd like to introduce you to a new concept, a comb!"

Harry frowned at him. "You know, I think I liked you better when we weren't getting along. I'm going to go down and play surfer dude for a while. Want to come?"

"Have you looked outside lately? If you want to surf in that, you are a better man than I am." Draco cringed realizing that he had just given Harry a great opening.

Harry was never one to let such a great opportunity go. "Well, everyone already knows that I *am* the better man. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure that out."

Harry laughed as Draco rolled his eyes. "Shut it, Potter."

Harry moved the heavy curtains aside and looked out at the stormy gray day and sighed. "Well there go my plans for the day."

"Wanna play chess?"

He shrugged. "Sure, why not! I've got nothing to lose."

"Except chess." Malfoy laughed as he set up the game. Harry sat down opposite him.

"I warn you now Malfoy, I'm not very good. So don't laugh. Ron tried to teach..." He stopped in mid-sentence and shook his head. Malfoy looked up at him. "Damn, for a minute I almost forgot."

From the middle of the table came a small but commanding voice. "Are you two going to play or not?"

They looked down at the miniature knight on the board and both men said, "Sod off!"

Harry sighed and made the first move. "Pawn to D4. So Malfoy, what's your story? Are you hiding, running away or just vacationing?"

"I'll have you know that Malfoy's do not hide OR run away. We...relocate for a while. . I'm actually on a secret mission to make your life miserable; is it working yet?"

Harry ignored the snide comment and smirked. "Ahh...I see...so that's a big 'no' on the vacation question. Ok, so why have you...*ahem*...relocated?"

"It's a long sorted story. Pawn to E3."

Harry glanced out the window at the storm. "We appear to have plenty of time. What about the Ministry?"

Malfoy looked out the window too. "Quit."

"And you relocated – why?"

"Hrummph."

"What was that, Malfoy? I didn't quite catch that."

Malfoy started to answer but Harry held a hand up. "Let's see if I can guess. Ahh...your girlfriend is getting serious and you aren't ready to settle down and have a lot of little Malfoys' running around! Is that right?"

"Not even close, Potter, besides, I'm more careful than that. Try again."

Harry thought for a moment. "Your father has figured out a way to bully you even from Azkaban, so you came to the last place he would think to find you, in a Muggle hotel, on an island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, belonging to the United States."

Draco looked amazed. "That is remarkably close, actually Potter. Believe it or not, my father is getting out of Azkaban. I received notice from the Ministry four days ago. I guess my work as Auror has some advantages. They said – well, I'll let you read it for yourself." Draco left the table and went to his room and collected the roll of parchment and brought it out to Harry and handed it to him.

"Here"

Harry took it and began reading.

The Ministry of Magic sends its deepest regards to Mr. Draco Malfoy.

Dear Mr. Malfoy,

We feel that it is our duty to inform you that the release of prisoner number 21414116, namely Mr. Lucius Malfoy, is emanate.

Mr. Lucius Malfoy has served his five-year term in Azkaban and will be released on March 15.

Because there have been hints of threats made against your person by said Mr. Lucius Malfoy, we feel that it is our duty to inform you of this event.

We hope this letter finds you well.

Sincerely Yours,

Matilda Dyrumple ammlle

Associate Minister of Magical Law Enforcement.

Harry was quiet for a while, and then he looked up at him. "March 15th? How very Shakesperian of them. Beware the Ides of March. Do you have a plan of action? What if he shows up here?"

Draco sat back in his chair and rested his elbow on the arm, and put a finger to his mouth as he thought. Then he sighed. "Potter, if Lucius shows up here, I am going to have to face him. I don't want to kill him, he is my father after all, but I feel that it will eventually come to that. It will be him or me. He won't forget that I helped put him in prison a second time, and he is notorious for carrying grudges."

Harry only nodded and they sat in silence looking out at the dismal day, interrupted only by the light snoring of the pieces on the chessboard and an occasional flash of lightening across the sky.

Draco suddenly put his hands down on the chair and lifted himself up. "But, until then, it's party time!"

Harry only groaned. "I thought we were playing chess. I'm not doing another night like last night."

"Come on, Potter, lighten up!"

"Sorry, I'm more of a sit-on-the-beach-and-go-surfing type of bloke, than I am a stay-up-all-night-and-drink-myself-sick type of bloke."

"Maybe so, Potter, but you aren't sitting on the beach or going surfing today. And now that I have a partner in crime, you're stuck."

With another groan, Harry sunk down deeper in the chair.

"Besides I know just who you need to get over – everything."

Harry mumbled something.

"What did you say?"

"I said I don't want to get over it. I don't ever want to forget how it felt, so that I won't put myself in that position again. I've learned one thing about myself, I can be taught."

Draco smirked. "You aren't going to cry, are you, Potter?"

"Go to Hell, Malfoy."

Draco laughed.

TBC

A/N: I wanted to take a moment here and thank all of you who are reading/reviewing. Reviews are the only payment that authors get. That's one of the reasons they are so important. That being said, I want to thank: dracoredeemed, Loyd1989, kuba89, laica-27 and Adam-Bloodraven.

Chapter 4 – I'm bored

A deep sigh escaped Harry for about the twentieth time in the past half-hour.

Draco rolled his eyes. "Potter, you sound like a hissing snake. Cut it out. I'm trying to get my beauty rest."

"Take it from someone who talks to snakes, Malfoy; that sounded nothing like a snake. Besides, if you stay out in the sun for much longer, you might as well turn yourself into a Sunday pot roast."

He ignored his partner and continued as if he hadn't spoken. "Pouting is not your thing, Potter. Cut it out."

"Two weeks, Malfoy! Two bloody weeks! A sodding fortnight! Fourteen beastly days! Partying every night is getting very old. The same girls, the same drinks, the same place!" He stood up from his lounge chair and threw his hands up in the air. "There has got to be something different to do around here!"

Draco groaned. "Potter, quit whining! Bloody hell, give it a rest!"

Another sigh escaped him and he threw himself back into his chair. "Merlin, I'm bored!"

"Ladies and gentlemen, we have a world record. Harry Potter – the boy who wouldn't bloody well die – has gone two weeks, three days – seven hours and –" he looked at his watch "–twenty seven minutes doing absolutely nothing to save the world." Draco picked a straw out of his drink and held it to Harry's face like a microphone. "How does it feel, Mr. Potter?"

"Drop dead, Malfoy." He grumbled.

"There you have it folks; straight from the horses' ar...um, mouth."

Harry picked up the newspaper he had bought that morning and started scanning the classified ads. "Maybe I'll find a job."

Malfoy leaned back into his chair. "Yeah? What do you know how to do?"

"I could do anything!"

Draco smirked and grabbed part of the newspaper and laid back and put it over his face.

Harry was quiet for a while as he scanned the ads for a position that looked like it might not bore him to tears. "I could wash dishes. I've done that quite a bit over my lifetime."

Draco mumbled from under his newspaper shelter. "Servants work."

Harry looked at the man in the newspaper tent then back at the ads. "Hmm, let's see. Oh here...I could wait tables!"

Draco chuckled. "Servants work."

"How about landscaping!"

Draco removed the newspaper all together. "Hot, sweaty, servants work! C'mon Potter, if you are serious about this at least don't go for something that's beneath you. You are an Auror for Merlin's sake. Here..." He grabbed the paper from him "...Let's see." He perused the paper for a long moment then smiled. "Here you go Potter. 'Wanted: Clown for children's parties.' Perfect! Oh wait; 'Must be able to perform magic.' Sorry Potter you were almost qualified."

Harry picked up a towel and snapped the blond with it.

"Ow, that hurt!" He grumbled and rubbed his leg.

"Good! Now I consider my day's mission complete." He reached over and grabbed the paper. "Give me the paper back." Harry snatched it from Draco and sat down again and started reading. He was quiet for a while as he read then, "This is it!"

"What?" Draco asked.

"Wanted, general help in residence children's home!"

“A residence children’s home?”

“An orphanage dolt!”

“I knew that. What makes you think that they would hire you? You don’t know anything about kids.”

“What’s to know?”

Draco looked disgusted. “You aren’t serious about this!”

“You bet I am. What’s wrong with that?”

“Number one, eeeoo!” Draco wrinkled his nose in distaste, “Working with runny nose little twerps who don’t listen to a word you say. They’ll have you screaming and running from the building within an hour. Why kids?”

“Well, they are honest. You always know where you stand with them. See you later Draco. I think I have a job interview.” He stood to leave.

Draco laid back and put his sunglasses down. “It’s your funeral, Potter!”

Chapter 5 – Dragons and Teddy Bears

“Your resume is rather sketchy, Mr. Potter.”

“Yes, I know Mrs. Lee. I was born and raised in England. A good portion of that time I was in...a...a boarding school in Scotland. There’s not a lot of opportunity to get gainful employment in those circumstances.”

“Do you have any experience with children?”

He chuckled. “About the most I can say is that I was one, once.”

“Continue, Mr. Potter,” She was smiling. “Why should I consider you for this position?”

A good sign Harry thought. “Well, I left school when I was 17 and straight away started training to work for the Ministry of Ma...” Harry stopped himself. “...The Ministry.”

“Well, that’s laudable, Mr. Potter. What did you do in the Ministry?”

Harry knew he had to be careful. “Well, to put it simply, I helped protect the people in the area I was assigned, from other people who wanted...to hurt them.”

“I am very impressed, Mr. Potter! Kind of a missionary warrior!”

Harry looked confused; luckily a woman came into the room at that moment, dragging a four-year-old by the ear. “I am very sorry to interrupt Mrs. Lee, but Mikeal is kicking and biting again!”

The matron frowned and looked at the little boy. “Who was on the receiving end this time?”

“Kali.”

“Thank you, Miss. Aliea.” Mrs. Lee stood up and walked toward the little boy and looked down her nose at him. “Well Mikeal, what have you to say for yourself?”

The little boy shuffled his feet and twiddled his fingers. "I sorwy Mrs. Lee. Kali said my mommy and dad brought me here 'cause they dinint like me." Fat tears started rolling down his face.

Mrs. Lee put a comforting hand on the boy's head. "Be that as it may Mikeal, we don't hit and bite...."

Harry watched this exchange and realized that Mrs. Lee reminded him very much of Minerva McGonagall. He touched Mrs. Lee on the shoulder. "May I?"

She looked at him skeptically. "Go ahead. Maybe you can talk to him. Heavens knows I've tried."

Harry sat on the floor next to Mikeal. The boy peeked an eye around Mrs. Lee's leg and tried to hide from Harry's sight.

"Hullo, Mikeal, my name is Harry." He said and smiled at the boy.

In response Mikeal kicked Harry's shin.

"Mikeal!" Mrs. Lee scolded but Harry held up a hand.

"Why did you do that Mikeal?"

"'Cause you want to take me away, an' I don' wanna go with you."

Harry waved a hand in dismissal. "Nah, I wanna come *here* to play with you, if Mrs. Lee will allow it."

The boy peeked out from behind Mrs. Lee. "You want ta come here?"

"Yep!"

"And I don't hafta leave?"

"Nope!"

The little boy turned hopeful eyes to the Director. "Can Harry play with me, Mrs. Lee?"

"I want to talk to Harry first. You go and apologize to Kali alright?"

The boy hung his head. "Do I hafta?"

"Yes, you do Mikeal."

Harry looked sympathetically at the boy. "Before you go Mikeal, can I tell you a secret?"

"Yep."

"Both my mum and dad died when I was only one. I wasn't big like you are. People tried to tell me things like that too. But do you know what...?"

The little boy spoke with his fingers in his mouth and peeked around Mrs. Lee's leg. "What?"

Harry touched the little boy's chest. "As long as you know, in here, that they loved you, it shouldn't matter what other people say. Do you know that they loved you, Mikeal?"

The little boy looked at Harry with awe and nodded. "Yes."

"That will never leave you. Now, go apologize to Kali, OK?"

"OK, Harry!"

Harry watched as the little boy ran out of the room, then stood up and dusted his trousers off.

Mrs. Lee was looking at him sternly. "Is what you just said to that child true, Mr. Potter?"

Harry looked a bit confused at her stern tone, but answered. "Every word!"

"You grew up an orphan?" Harry noticed her face start to soften again.

"Yes, I did. I was actually raised by my aunt and uncle who didn't want me in their house. I had to listen to just the same sort of things from my cousin and his parents. It was not a pleasant childhood."

“Forgive me my abruptness, Mr. Potter. I do not condone lying to the children. When you said those things to Mikeal, I thought for certain that you were doing just that.”

“No, I wouldn’t lie to him. That’s not the way to gain an adult’s trust, and it is not the way to gain a child’s trust either.”

“Very well, Mr. Potter. Despite your deplorable lack of experience, I believe you will be a welcome addition to our home. If you would like the position, it is yours.”

Harry smiled. “Thank you, Mrs. Lee, I look forward to it.”

“I’m sorry to say that the pay isn’t as good as it should be. We are on a very tight budget.”

“That’s alright, Mrs. Lee. It’s not the money I need. I just need to be doing something constructive.”

When would you like to start, Mr. Potter?”

“First off, please call me Harry; and second, since I told Mikeal that I would come out and play with him, I guess now would be as good a time as any; if that is alright with you.”

“Excellent! I’ll introduce you to the other employees and the children.”

They left the tiny office and approached a large Hawaiian woman. “This is Miss Annali Kalikwa.”

Then indicating Harry “...and this is Mr. Harry Potter.”

The woman took Harry’s hand in hers and shook it vigorously. “Call me Anna.”

Harry was all smiles. “It’s nice to meet you, Anna.”

“Anna is our head cook and in charge of the housekeeping staff.” The director moved on to a young lady that was playing a game with some of the children. “This is Miss Aliea Sawyers.”

Harry smiled at her as warmly as he could manage without looking cheesy. There was no other word for it, she was beautiful. Her hair was pitch black and hung in an attractive sheet down her back and shone like silk. Her skin was the beautiful bronze of one that had been in the sun; but it was her eyes that attracted him. They were so dark that he could almost lose himself in them.

“Hello, Aliea, I’m Harry,” He took her hand to shake it and her skin was as smooth as anything he had ever felt.

Mrs. Lee moved on. “And this is our Miss Moira Malfoy.”

Harry forced himself to tear his eyes away from Aliea. “I’m sorry, did you say Malfoy?”

Moira smiled. “Yes, why?”

At that point Mikeal was pulling on Harry’s hand. “C’mon, Harry, You promised you would play!”

Harry looked at Moira. “We’ll have to talk later.”

Within moments, Harry was accepted into the group of 4, 5 and 6 year olds that were at the moment using him as a jungle gym.

Harry was laughing; more than he had in ages. “All right you lot. Everyone gather round and sit on the floor. I’m going to tell you all a story.” A cheer went up and there was a lot of bouncing around.

“If you don’t sit down, you don’t get a story.” He waited for the children to comply then sat on the floor with them. “OK, everyone, this story is about a very good wizard. What shall we name our good wizard, Mikeal?”

“Harry!” Mikeal yelled.

Harry chuckled. “Alright, Harry the good wizard went to a school. This school taught all the magical children how to do their magic.”

“Did they teach the children to turn things into toads?”

“Yes, they did! They taught how to make magical potions and how to fly on a broom. Now, Harry loved to fly on his broom, and he played games with some of the other students who also loved to fly on their brooms.”

“But there was one wizard who was not nice. His name was...” Harry growled the name “...DRRRACO!” The children screamed in delight. Out of the corner of his eye, he noticed Moira spin around and look at him with her mouth open.

“Does anyone know what Draco means?” He waited for the children to try to figure it out. After a moment, he supplied the answer. “It means, Dragon! And Draco had a temper just like a dragon. Every time the wizards would get together and play on their brooms, good wizard Harry would beat Draco. This made Draco very, very angry, and he growled at Harry, and used his magic wand on him. But good wizard Harry was always ready for him.”

“Then one day, while they were playing a game on their broom sticks, Draco was hit by a ball and knocked off of his broom. Now, he was waaaay up in the sky and Harry knew that if he hit the ground, he would surely die. So Harry, without even thinking that this was his enemy, zoomed as fast as he could to catch Draco before he hit the ground.”

Harry looked at the gathered children. Their eyes were wide, their mouths open. “And do you know what happened?”

“What?” Most of them asked. But one little boy jumped up and yelled, “He went squish!”

Harry laughed. “No, he didn’t go squish. Good wizard Harry caught Draco just before he hit the ground. And you know what happened after that? Harry and Draco became friends. So, that means that you should always be nice like good wizard Harry. You never know who is going to end up being your friend.”

The little boy looked disappointed. “Ahh, I wanted him to go *squish!*” The little boy accentuated the word ‘squish’ with a loud clap.

Harry scooped him up. "And what if you were the chap that was falling?"

The boy's eyes got wide. "You'd catch me wouldn't you, Harry?"

"Of course I would." Harry hugged him briefly.

Mrs. Lee, who had been watching the proceedings, came over to the group smiling. "Children, it is time to set the table for dinner. Go wash your hands. Go on scoot!"

There was a collective, "aaahhhh."

Harry smiled as he put his captive down on his feet again. "Hey you lot; if you don't put the dishes out, you'll have to eat your dinner right off the table. Eeeeeeeeeoooooo." Soon the children joined him "Eeeeeeeeeoooooooooooo!"

All the children herded out except for one. Mikeal looked up at Harry. "Can you be my best friend, Harry?"

Harry knelt down and gathered the child up into his arms for a hug. "Best friends, Mikeal."

"Don't leave yet, Harry." Mikeal ran out of the room but in a matter of moments, returned. "Best friends have to give presents. This is my teddy. Will you sleep with him so he won't be scared?"

"Mikeal, I don't know what to say. Won't teddy wonder where you are?"

"Yeah, prob'ly but I don't have nofin' else."

"I tell you what Mikeal..." Harry reached up and took a chain from around his neck and put it on the bear. "Now, so that teddy won't be scared, I'll let him stay with you. That way our best friend presents will be safe. OK?"

Mikeal looked up at Harry and beamed. "OK?"

“Now, go put teddy back in your room then go wash your hands like Mrs. Lee asked you.”

Mikeal started to move away but then ran back to Harry and threw his arms around his neck and pressed his lips to his cheek. He then ran away leaving Harry alone with Mrs. Lee.

She walked over smiling at him. “I don’t know what kind of magic you performed on that child today, Mr. Potter, but I have never seen him act like this before. He is generally the most unruly of the group. He never joins in. He rarely talks to anyone except in anger.”

“He’s a wonderful kid. I feel a connection to him.” Harry was staring off in the direction that Mikeal ran out, and then turned to Mrs. Lee. “Thank you, Mrs. Lee. This is exactly what I needed.”

She smiled and patted his shoulder. “See you tomorrow Harry.”

Chapter 6 – Twenty Questions

Harry walked out into the bright moonlight and automatically thought of Remus as he always did during a full moon. Then he made his way down the steps, and a shadow stepped out to meet him.

“Hello, Harry.”

He smiled. “Hello, Moira, you want to go get some coffee?”

Moira smiled. “Yes, I think we need to.”

They walked a couple of blocks to a coffee shop and took a booth in the back.

Harry smiled. “OK, which one of us goes first?”

“You go first.”

“OK, it’s not just a coincidence that your last name is Malfoy is it?”

“No, it’s my name by marriage. My turn, *the* Harry Potter?”

Harry pulled back the scruff of hair over his scar and she nodded. “My turn; married to whom?”

“Draco.”

He was shocked. “No way!”

“Really! We were married **two** days after he left Hogwarts.”

“Why are you here?”

“I left him **three** days after he left Hogwarts.”

Harry laughed. “One day? That sounds right.”

“By the way, that was a darling story you told the kids today. Was it true?”

“All except the friends part. It took a little longer for that to happen. In fact, I’m not sure if it has happened at all. We just tolerate each other. We were partners in the Auror Department. We both quit, for differing reasons, and we both ended up here, separately. It’s like we’re drawn to each other, or something. I can always depend on the fact that if I am somewhere, he will eventually show up. It’s kind of freaky, really. Does he know that you’re here?”

“Merlin, I hope not! I don’t even want to be in the same hemisphere with him.”

Harry looked up at her through the scruff of hair on his forehead. “Ahh...I have some bad news for you.”

She looked at him suspiciously. “What?”

“He’s my flatmate.”

“Here?”

“Here. We were staying at the Hyatt for about a week, but we just moved into a flat.”

She paled noticeably. “Damn.”

Harry looked at her curiously. “What could have happened in one day that made you want to turn tail and run?”

“Well...it was an arranged marriage. My father, in all his infinite wisdom, thought that it would be a good political match. I will probably never know why. I had never even met Draco until two hours before the wedding; and *I* went looking for *him*. Our parents didn’t want us to meet ahead of time. I don’t know if it was because he was such a git or if it was me.”

“It was him!” Harry stated emphatically. “You don’t seem like much of a git to me.”

“Well, I didn’t care much for what I saw, I will tell you that. He was like a spoiled child throwing a temper tantrum; and it never got better after the wedding.”

"It wouldn't have. He acted like a spoiled child for the seven years that I knew him in school. But in his defense, he has changed..." He shrugged. "...at least a little. Like I said, he was my partner. I haven't seen him throw a temper tantrum in at least a couple of days anyway." Harry laughed and she half-heartedly joined in.

"So did you get the marriage annulled?"

"No, I can't. I...um...my family would...suffer if I did that."

Harry shook his head in disgust. "This reeks of Lucius Malfoy!"

Moira only nodded and started crying.

Harry handed her a hanky. "Does he know any of this?"

"I would think so. His father drew up the contract."

"Believe me, that doesn't mean anything. Why don't you come home with me and talk to him?"

"No, I couldn't." She shook her head vehemently.

"Number one, meeting problems head on is the best way to get rid of them once and for all. Number two, I promise you he has changed; actually quite a lot since school. Number three, maybe the two of you together can figure a way out of this, if that is what you decide that you want to do. How about it?"

She looked helplessly up at Harry. "I've spent the last five years running away from him. Now you want me to meet with him. I just can't, Harry."

"Yes, you can; and if it will help I will stay to make sure he doesn't do anything too stupid; all right?"

Her sigh was heavy with despair but she nodded.

"OK, I'm going to go call him and make sure that...aah"

She looked up at Harry. "That he's alone?"

“Aah...yeah!”

She only nodded.

Harry paced as the phone rang. When the answering machine kicked on, he sighed. “Draco! Pick up the phone you giant git.”

He was greeted with silence.

“Draco, I’m not going away until you pick up the phone.”

Still, his flatmate refused to answer his call.

“Draco, if you don’t pick up the phone, I’ll just bring your *wife* home to see you *and* your current company.”

Harry heard a click on the other end. “What did you say, Potter?”

“First tell me what condition the apartment is in.”

“The usual, what did you say about my wife?”

“Moira; and I’m not saying any more. Get rid of what ever girl you have there and pick up the living room.” He waited for a moment. “Draco do you hear me? Draco!”

“Aah...yeah sure, Harry...Get rid of the living room and pick up the girl...right?”

“Yeah, something like that. You’ve got fifteen minutes!”

Harry hung up his cell phone and went back to Moira. “Harry, I’m having second thoughts about this.”

“It’ll be all right, I promise. Come on. Harry threw money on the table and held out his arm for her to take.

As they walked, Moira suddenly stopped and looked at Harry. “Didn’t I read somewhere that you were married?”

“Was. Not now.”

“Oh...I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to dredge up bad feelings.”

“It’s OK, but let’s talk about something else.”

“All right. If Draco is an Auror for the Ministry, what is he doing in Hawaii?”

“Was an Auror. He’s hiding...excuse me...” Harry chuckled, “...relocating. His father just got out of Azkaban and is looking for him. He wants pay-back for turning against him and helping put him in prison in the first place.”

They walked on in silence. After about ten minutes, they arrived at Harry and Draco’s apartment. “Be it ever so humble...here we are.”

She stopped at the bottom of the steps, sighed deeply, squared her shoulders and looked at Harry. “Head on!”

He smiled and nodded. Harry was surprised when they walked in. The living room actually looked decent. Draco came out of his room looking as smooth and collected as ever.

“Hello, Moira. It’s good to see you again.”

“Draco. You look...good.”

“And you look as lovely as ever. Would you care for a white wine? I believe that’s your favorite.”

“Yes, but...how did you...?”

He just smiled, an air of mystery about him. He poured two glasses of wine and handed her one, and without taking his eyes from her spoke to Harry. “Thank you, Potter, that will be all.”

Moira almost did a spit take as she laughed and looked at Harry. Harry rolled his eyes. At her nod, he left the two of them alone. But when he opened his door he realized how Draco had been able to get the living room straightened in such a short time. He had gathered every box up threw them into Harry’s room. “Draco, you bloody prat!”

Chapter 7 – Families Made and Re-made

The next morning, Harry stumbled out to the kitchen. Draco was already up, drinking a cup of tea. Then Harry looked again. Draco was wearing the same clothes he had on the day before. “You OK?”

It took Draco a moment to answer as he considered the question. “I really don’t know. This whole thing came out of the blue.”

“I can imagine it was a shock.”

The two were quiet for a while and Harry made himself a cup of tea.

“Of all the places on this bloody island that you could find a job, you start working at a place with my wife.”

“Well...I don’t believe in coincidence. I believe that the cosmic forces were all pulling together to force you two to work this out.”

Draco looked skeptical.

Then Harry shrugged his shoulders and smiled. “Or it’s a coincidence! So, what are you going to do?”

Draco threw his hands in the air. “Who knows? We stayed up all night talking. Oh, by the way, she probably won’t be in to work today.”

Harry only grunted and took a swallow of his tea. “Well, as pleasant as this is, I have a job to get to. I have to get ready.”

Harry turned to go to his room but Draco stopped him. “Did it help?”

“What do you mean?”

“Getting work.”

Harry smiled. “Yeah, a lot. Oh, by the way, clear that mess out of my room you git.”

Draco laughed, “Well, I had to put it somewhere!”

“Well, why don’t you unpack some of those boxes today? That would help.”

Harry showered and dressed, he found himself almost buoyant as he walked the few blocks to the orphanage. When he turned the corner and approached the house, he noticed Mikeal sitting on the steps holding his teddy and fingering the chain that Harry had given him. “Hey there best friend! You waiting for me?”

Mikeal’s face lit up when he saw Harry. He jumped down the steps and ran to him. “We’re having oatmeal for brefast, Harry. You wanna eat wiff me?”

“Sure, Mikeal!”

The two entered the building and Harry was greeted with chaos. The older children were getting ready for school. The employees were changing beds, the cooks were banging pots in the kitchen, the phone was ringing and the smaller children were running around screaming and chasing each other playing tag.

As soon as they saw him, the younger kids attacked Harry, and it wasn’t long before you couldn’t tell where Harry stopped and kids began.

Finally, he took them aside and started playing with them. The older children looked longingly at the small group as they one by one headed out the door to go to school.

Harry smiled and waved to them. “I’ll see you lot later.” After they were gone, Harry led his group to the kitchen for breakfast and as promised, he sat next to Mikeal and the boy beamed at him.

Harry’s days became a blur of kids. He would arrive at the Home at 7:00 a.m. and play with the kids or help with homework. He would sooth hurts with hugs and laughter and tell stories about good wizard Harry that had all the children enthralled.

He even dragged Draco to the Home several times; and though he grumbled and complained all the way, Draco found himself enjoying it immensely. In fact Harry and Moira would stand back and watch with

smiles on their faces as Draco would hold three month old Nina and let her run her little fingers through his hair while he sat and rocked her to sleep.

Days became weeks; weeks became months. For the first time in his life, Harry felt complete. He discovered, with surprise, that he had fallen in love with Mikeal.

In June, Harry approached Mrs. Lee. He arrived as usual and greeted the kids and gave Mikeal a huge hug. When he got the opportunity he knocked on the small office door.

"Come in, it's open." She looked up and smiled at him. "Yes, Harry?"

Harry sat in the chair and mused at the last time he sat here. He didn't realize then that his act of desperation would change his life permanently; and if he had his choice, it would.

Harry sat on the opposite side of the large desk.

"Is there a problem, Harry?"

"No, nothing like that. Mrs. Lee, I want to start proceedings to adopt Mikeal." He looked directly at the older woman. "I've been thinking about this for some time now and I would like to have it be official by his birthday in July."

"This year! Oh Harry, that is next to impossible. It takes months to adopt a child. There's applications, reviews, observations, more reviews and..."

Harry held up a hand. "Mrs. Lee, will you support my decision?"

"Of course Harry, but I would advise you not to tell Mikeal right away. It could take a very long time."

"On the contrary, Mrs. Lee, I want to ask his opinion on the subject. This involves him as much as it does me. I've been as honest with him as I could since I met him and I am not going to start going behind his back now, just when it is so important that we keep trust between us. In fact I want to talk to him right now."

Mrs. Lee studied Harry for a long moment then nodded. "All right, Harry. You may use my office to talk to him. I hope things go the way you want them too." Harry noticed that she looked a bit sad though, as if she didn't believe that it would happen.

"Thank you, Mrs. Lee. I'll go get him now if that's OK?"

She only nodded and watched him leave the room.

Harry went out into the main room and out the back door where the children were playing on the swings. He smiled as he watched Mikeal fly back and forth.

Aliea slowed the swing down after a few minutes, "All right, Mikeal, it is Bobby's turn."

"Ahh...gee!"

She stopped the swing and Mikeal sat there stubbornly refusing to move until he saw Harry. Then he jumped out of the swing and ran to him. "Harry, Harry, did you see me fly? Did you?"

"You bet I did, Mikeal. In fact I think that you would give Good Wizard Harry a run for his money."

"Naah...he gots a broom. That would be fun!"

"You bet it would be. Hey, can you come in for a minute? I have something that I need to discuss with you man to man."

The dark haired child smiled up at him and slipped his hand into Harry's.

Harry led him to Mrs. Lee's office but the boy stopped before going through the door. "I dinint do anyfing wrong, did I?"

"Absolutely not!" The child walked in and Harry closed the door behind him. Harry sat in Mrs. Lee's chair and gathered the boy onto his lap.

“Mikeal, I have something very important that I need to discuss with you; and I want you to know that it is completely your decision what you want to do. All right?”

Mikeal looked warily at Harry but nodded his head anyway.

Harry realized that this was a life changing moment. No matter how this went, he knew that his life would never be the same. With a sigh he looked at the boy and smiled. “Mikeal, first off, I want to tell you that coming here and meeting you has been the best thing that ever happened to me.” The boy was silent as he studied Harry’s face.

“Mikeal, I love you. You are like a son to me, which is why I wanted to talk to you. Do you know what adoption means?”

Big tears filled the little boy’s eyes as he looked up at his hero. “It means that someone is gonna take me ‘way.”

Harry smiled gently at the boy and brought him in closer to his chest. “Not just anyone Mikeal, “someone who loves you very much and wants very much to be your daddy.”

His eyes had lost their brightness and now looked just dull. “Do I have to, Harry?”

“Don’t you want to know who thinks that you are so special that he would want you to come live with him and be a real family?”

He started crying in earnest now, “n...n...no Ha...Ha...Harry.”

Harry kissed his forehead. “Even if it is me who wants to be your daddy?”

Mikeal stopped crying and looked up at him, “You, Harry?” He sniffed. “You wanna ‘dopt me? Really?”

Harry grabbed a tissue off of the desk and wiped Mikeal’s eyes and nose. “Only if you want me to, Mikeal.”

The boy threw his arms around Harry's neck and gave him a big kiss. His voice came out in a whisper, "Yes, Harry, I wan' you ta be my daddy. Can I call you daddy?"

"Sure you can; but I want to warn you, son, that this could take a while before they let me bring you to live with me. I have a lot of people to talk to! In the mean time you can stay here and play with your friends; and sometimes maybe you can come home with me for a visit."

The boy leaned against him and whispered. "Can Uncle Draco live with us too, daddy?"

Harry laughed. "Well, I don't know Mikeal. I think that Uncle Draco is going to be living with Miss Moira, we'll see though. Now, there are going to be sometimes that I won't be here, because I am talking to the people that will let me take you home with me, so I don't want you to worry, OK?"

"OK, daddy."

"Now, I want you to go out and play with your friends. I am going to be in here talking with Mrs. Lee, to see about all of this, OK?"

Mikeal jumped down off Harry's lap. "Hurry, daddy." Then he ran out of the door. Harry sat with a smile on his face.

Mrs. Lee returned a few minutes later, with a smile, and a cup of coffee, which she handed to Harry. "By the smile on that child's face, I take it that it went well?"

Harry nodded. "Very well."

"Well then, let me be the first to congratulate you, Harry; Congratulations, it's a boy!"

Harry laughed. "Yes, he is, isn't he. Do you have papers to get things started or do I need to go to my lawyer?"

"Both really." She pulled a packet of papers out of a file cabinet and handed them to Harry. "These will get you started. You need to get

your lawyer involved as soon as possible; it may speed things up. In the mean time, I am going to make some phone calls on your behalf. If there's a way to speed the process up, we'll find it."

Harry hugged the older woman. "Thank you very much, Mrs. Lee."

"Don't mention it, Harry. Now, I want you to take the packet, go home and fill them all out. Get hold of your lawyer. He will tell you what you need to do next."

Harry nodded. "All right, I'll go say goodbye to Mikeal first."

Harry went home and started filling out the papers at the kitchen counter.

Draco stumbled to the kitchen wearing only his pajama bottoms.

Harry laughed. "Morning sunshine." Harry then looked at his watch. "Or should I say afternoon?"

"Harumph," was the only answer as he poured himself a cup of coffee. A short time later Moira entered the tiny kitchen, the other half of Draco's pajamas making their appearance as well.

Harry smirked and looked at his roommate. "You two seem to be getting along well!"

Moira's eyes got wide. "Harry, I thought you went to work!"

Harry chuckled. "Obviously."

He watched as Moira ran back to Draco's room then looked at Draco. "So are you two planning to play house?"

Draco stopped, his mug half-way to his lips and looked thoughtfully at Harry. "Is it considered playing house when you are with your wife?"

"Sure it is!"

"Well, true to my modis operandi, I wasted a good amount of time not paying attention to what I already had." He shook his head. "I suppose I owe you thanks."

“No need.” Harry looked down and began filling the papers out again. “It’s what I do. It’s just me saving the world again.” He chuckled.

“What are you working on?”

“Adoption papers. I’m adopting Mikeal.”

Moira came back into the room fully dressed. “Adopting Mikeal? Harry, congratulations!”

“Thank you. I’m Apparating to the Ministry today. I’ll be back as soon as possible, but I suspect that a wizard adopting a Muggle child will mean paperwork and lots of it. “You going in today, Moira?”

“A little later, I’ve got night watch tonight.”

“Good, if you get a chance tell Mikeal that I may be gone for a couple days. Oh, that reminds me, Draco, Mikeal wanted to know if you could live with us.” Harry laughed. “You’ve made quite an impression on him.”

“He’s a cute kid; as kids go.”

“Uh huh, you can try and sound indifferent all you want to, but I’ve got your number you old softie.”

“Hey, I’m a Slytherin. Slytherin’s are not softies. Neither are Malfoy’s.”

Harry and Moira both moaned. Moira glared at Harry. “Now you’ve done it. Now we get the litany of what Malfoy’s are and are not.”

However, Harry plunged on. “Hey nothing, I’ve seen you with Nina. You’re a softie, admit it!”

Draco threw his arms in the air, “Oh all right, so I’m a softie. But only where Nina is concerned.” Then he stopped and thought for a moment and added, “and Kali, but that’s it.”

Moira leaned over and kissed his cheek, “Yes, Draco, we both know that you are a big tough Malfoy Slytherin with nothing but evil on your mind.”

Draco straightened himself, and looking as dignified as possible in a pair of pajama bottoms glared at the two of them. "That's right; and don't you two forget it."

Harry and Moira looked at each other and lasted a whole second before they burst out laughing.

Draco picked up his cup again and Moira slipped behind him and put her arms around his waist and kissed him somewhere between his shoulder blades. "You old softie."

Draco looked at Harry. "So you are going to adopt Mikeal?"

"Yeah, I kind of fell in love with the little squirt."

"Well, if there is anything I can do to help, let me know."

Harry looked at him. "Thanks Draco, I really appreciate that."

"Hey, it's the least I can do. You got me back with Moira." He rubbed an affectionate hand up Moira's arm and moved aside so that he could put an arm around her.

"I'm really glad that you two hit it off so well." He looked at the two of them and he suddenly felt like a third wheel. The look that passed between them was meant for a less crowded atmosphere.

"OK then, I'm going to go pack and I'll be gone for a couple days. Don't do anything that I wouldn't do." Harry gathered his papers up and winked at Moira before going to his room to pack a few things.

When he came out, he looked at the two of them who were now sitting on the sofa lost in each other. "I'm leaving now. If either of you two hear of a house for sale somewhere around here, look into it for me. I probably need to start showing some stability if I'm going to be a dad." Then he grinned, "I'm going to be a dad! Wicked!"

"Not if you don't get out of here you're not! Go!" Draco laughed.

Harry had to make several Apparations to get to the Leaky Cauldron. The toughest one was getting across the ocean. When he arrived, he

was exhausted from the trip; and knowing that the fourteen hour time difference would put the time at just about 2:00 a.m. in London, he determined to get a room and introduce his head to the pillow...after he worked on finishing the paperwork. Tom was quite accommodating, despite the late hour, and Harry soon had a room.

About 4:00 a.m. he finished, and decided that he had better try to get some sleep. He knew that it would be a long day for him.

He lay on the bed for a long time thinking about Mikeal. With these thoughts that he finally drifted into a sound sleep.

Chapter 8 – I'm not your Mate

The sun beamed through the windows, hitting Harry full in the face. He woke with a start until he remembered why he was in a strange room. With a smile, he got up, showered, dressed then Apparated to the Ministry.

Harry walked down the familiar halls, greeting those he knew with a smile. He passed Ron who looked at him in shock. "H...Harry?"

Harry stopped and turned at the sound of his name; but the smile dropped from his face when he saw Ron. "Oh, it's you. Excuse me, I have an appointment."

Harry continued down the corridor as Ron hurried to catch up with him. "Harry, wait a minute."

Harry stopped with a sigh, and then turned to look at him, "What Weasley? What could you possibly have to say to me?"

"Just...that well, just...it's good to see ya mate."

"I'm not your mate, Weasley. Nor will I ever be again. You and Hermione stabbed me in the back and I will never forgive you for that. The two of you are a chapter in my life that I have put behind me. Now if you don't mind, I have more important things to do then stand around talking to a traitor."

In anger, Harry spun around and hurried to the lift. As the lift doors closed, he just looked at Ron's face. He was surprised that he felt nothing for his former friend. Not hatred, not regret, not even the pang of missing the companionship that had been so prominent for years.

Taking a deep breath as he exited the lift, he headed down the corridor to Vince's office. He pushed the door open and snuck up behind Peggy and put his hands over her eyes. "Guess who?"

"I'd know that voice anywhere. HARRY..." She threw her arms around him and kissed both of his cheeks. "Where have you been?" She stood back and studied him up and down. "My goodness, Harry,

you are looking good. If I were a few years younger...and not married..."

Harry laughed. "Ahh, Peg, and that is where the problem lies. Why don't you leave the bum and run away with me?"

"Well I would, Harry, but you know Vince, he hates paperwork."

The two of them laughed and Peggy hugged him again. "It is really good to see you, Harry. You certainly look happier than the last time I saw you."

Harry nodded. "Yeah, I've put my life back together, which is what brings me here today. Is Vince in?"

"Not yet, I expect him any time now. He had an appointment first thing this morning. Would you like a cup of tea while you wait?"

"Yes, thanks, that sounds wonderful."

She poured him a cup and handed it to him with a tea bag, then went to sit at her desk.

"Can I ask you something, Peggy? What's Ron doing here?"

She scowled and huffed, "Ron Weasley is the new Assistant Minister of Magical Games and Sports." She huffed again, "Personally, I think that they should have hung him by his..." She looked up with a smile as the door opened expecting to see Vince.

But it wasn't Vince. It was Hermione. The smile fell from Peggy's face, Hermione didn't seem to notice.

Harry looked at Peggy and decided not to turn around. When he felt a light touch on his shoulder, he sighed and closed his eyes. "Peggy, I need to talk to Vince as soon as he gets in. If you would floo me when he arrives I would appreciate it. I'm staying at the Leaky Cauldron."

"Harry, can you at least talk to me?" Hermione begged.

Harry spun around and glared at her. "You know, you two have a lot of nerve, I'll give you that. Don't you know when to leave well enough alone? I don't want to talk to you Granger; and I don't want to talk to your boyfriend either. Or is he your husband now?"

Hermione stood straighter and glared at him, "Not yet. That's what I wanted to tell you. We'll be getting married..."

"Good! You two deserve each other." He looked back at Peggy, "Peggy, will you get the details from her. I am certainly not going to continue paying for their flat when they are married."

Hermione's face looked like a storm cloud. "No, Peggy, you can stop taking money from Harry's account immediately. I don't want his money."

"Was there anything else, Granger? Did you want to tell me that you are carrying his child? That would dig the screw in a little deeper. Or maybe that..."

He didn't get the opportunity to finish because she slapped him across the face; and surprisingly enough he slapped her back.

She put her hand to her cheek and glared at him again, "I can't believe that I ever loved you!"

"I *don't* believe that you ever loved me, so we are even!"

"Merlin, you are so full of yourself. Why didn't I see it before?"

"I'm full of myself? I'm the one who was wronged here. You think that I should just say 'Oh, that's all right, Hermione. Just tear my heart out, stomp on it a few dozen times and serve it to me on a platter. I'm Harry Potter; I'll just let it roll off my back.' Bloody hell, you are unbelievable, woman." Harry threw his hands up in the air, "Just leave, I have business to take care of and I will not let you or Weasley or anyone else mess this up for me. Now. GET. OUT!"

In a huff she spun around and slammed the door back against the wall and stormed out of the office.

Harry threw himself into the chair he had vacated. "They are absolutely unbelievable! Both of them."

Peggy came around the desk and touched Harry's reddened cheek. "It's all right, Harry. Why don't you tell me why you came today?"

Harry took a couple of deep breaths to calm himself before looking up at Peggy. He patted the hand that was still on his cheek. "I'm OK, Peggy. And as to why I'm here today..." He pulled the papers out of the case he was carrying, "...here, look these over."

She put her glasses on and studied the papers, then looked up at him with a smile, "Harry, I am so excited for you." She hugged him tightly. "This is wonderful."

"Oh, I see how it is..." Vince said smiling from the door, "...turn my back for one minute and you are snogging other men."

Peggy laughed. "Harry is here to see you, Vince."

He stuck his hand out. "It's good to see you, Harry. Come on in." Vince held the door to his office open for Harry to enter.

"You look remarkably well, considering...have you been doing nothing but lying on the beach?"

"Well, there was some of that...at first. I ran into Draco and the two of us sorta painted the town red."

Vince motioned him to follow into his office, but he stopped and raised an eyebrow. "Sorta?"

"Yeah, but that didn't last long. Then I found a job that I love."

Peggy walked in and handed the papers to Vince, "I think you are going to need these. Harry is going to be a father, Vince!"

Vince's eyebrow rose again. "It seems that you haven't been just working, Harry."

“Mind out of the gutter, Vince. I’m adopting a boy, Mikeal. He is a four year old in the residence home where I work.”

Vince looked down at the papers and started reading. He started flipping through each page and studying them thoroughly. Finally he looked up at Harry with a smile on his face. “I wish all my clients were as thorough as you, Harry. Everything seems to be in order. You do realize that a wizard adopting a muggle child could be difficult.”

“I know, Vince, but I love this kid. It’s like he is mine already. Can you push it through quickly?”

Vince laughed. “You aren’t a very patient person, you do know that don’t you, Harry?”

“Yes, I know, Vince, but you love me anyway.”

“Sometimes I wonder about that. How fast?”

“As soon as possible.”

He huffed. “How soon is ‘as soon as possible’ Harry?”

“Mikeal’s birthday is July 29th. I would like it to be final by then.” He looked at his lawyer sheepishly. “Can you do it?”

Vince looked at him with a smirk. “You do realize that it is June 17th don’t you?”

He nodded. “Yes I do, can you do it?”

Vince smiled sadly. “No. But I can at least get you custody by then; The adoption will take longer if only because I have to find free time on the docket to schedule it. I’ll be calling in all sorts of favors that I’ve worked long and hard to acquire; you owe me, **big** time, Harry.”

Harry grinned. “You pull this off for me and I’ll do anything you want. Just name it.”

Vince leaned back in his chair and seemed to be lost in thought for a moment, "I'll let you know about that. In the mean time, I'll let you take Peg and me out to lunch."

Harry smiled. "You've got it."

Chapter 9 – The Unwanted Visitor

Harry was in London for three days before he Apparated back to his apartment. When he left London, he left with a court date for custody with another date to be set for the actual adoption. Vince had worked efficiently with the Hawaiian authorities and had talked at length with Mrs. Lee. Since she was the social worker in charge of each of the children's cases, they were able to speed the process up.

He immediately went to the residence home and was greeted by an ecstatic Mrs. Lee. The director of the home hugged him so tightly that he was almost afraid that his eyes would pop. "Harry, I don't know how your lawyer was able to manipulate the adoption authorities, but he did it. I got a call from the court officers just this morning saying that because you had worked here and I gave you such a glowing report, that the judge had decided to waive the observation phase of the adoption. I have never heard of that before but I wasn't about to argue with her. I do not know what magic you, and your lawyer, performed, but you did it!"

"DADDY!"

Harry turned and held his arms out to Mikeal who ran straight to him. Harry scooped him up and hugged and kissed him. "Mikeal, I missed you so much, mate. Were you a good boy while I was gone?"

"Yes, I dinnent kick or hit anyone."

Harry turned to a beaming, Mrs. Lee. "Do you think that it is possible that I take my son out for a while?"

She beamed at him. "Of course, Harry, of course."

He looked at his son. "How about it, mate? Would you like to go to my house with me?"

He bounced in Harry's arms. "Yes, let's go now, daddy."

After bidding Mrs. Lee goodbye, they walked the short distance to Harry and Draco's apartment and found Draco and Moira dancing close, with soft candle light the only illumination.

He cleared his throat. "Hello, Moira, Draco."

As the two came apart, Draco frowned, until he saw Mikeal.

"Hi, uncle Dray, did you know that Harry is my daddy now?"

"I did munchkin. You sure are lucky."

"I know! Miss Moira, Harry's my daddy now."

"I heard, Mikeal. I'm so happy for both of you."

Harry laughed. "Mikeal, did you eat all of your dinner tonight?"

The little guy scuffed his toe in the carpet and looked sheepishly up at his dad. "Uhh...yeah."

Harry looked skeptical. "Mikeal, are you lying?"

"Well, I ate all the hamburger and I drank the milk, but they had blucky vegables, green beans..." he made a disgusted face, Harry looked disapprovingly.

"How are you going to get big and strong if you don't eat your vegetables, Mikeal?"

"I don' know."

"Well I thought we might all go out and celebrate but..."

Mikeal began bouncing up and down. "Can we get ice cream?"

"You didn't eat your..."

"Oh c'mon, Harry, give the kid a break, they were blucky veges. You can't expect anyone to eat blucky veges. Besides, it's not every day that a new family is started. I'll tell you what, I'll even buy." Draco went over to the kitchen counter and picked up his keys and waved them in the air "Any takers?"

Mikeal ran over and slipped his hand into Draco's, and looked hopefully at Harry.

“Oh, all right. Let’s go.” Harry chuckled and held out a hand to Moira and the four of them walked out and piled into Draco’s magically lengthened, candy apple red Lamborghini Diablo with the license plate that read ‘DRGON 1’.

Draco was a wild man. There was no other word for it. He zipped down the highway at a speed that would rival Harry’s firebolt.

Harry yelled at him. “You giant git, we have a kid in the car will you please take it easy?”

“Look at him, Harry, he loves it.”

“Maybe, but I don’t want you to kill him. “Slow down!”

“As you wish you almighty stick in the mud, you know, you can carry this fatherhood thing too far, Harry. You act like my granny. My father let me...” Draco stopped and considered what he was about to say, “...ah...never mind; point taken.”

They drove to the far side of the island and had ice cream at a tiny amusement park. Draco purchased tickets for the rides and Mikeal spent the evening riding and having a wonderful time.

Harry had to watch Draco like a hawk though. He kept trying to slip Mikeal all kinds of treats. Harry really didn’t want his son to get sick so he would frown Draco down, who eventually gave in and didn’t tempt the child any more. At least until Harry wasn’t looking.

When Mikeal started to show signs of wearing out, Harry picked him up and pushed his head down to his shoulder. “Moira, Dray, let’s go home.”

Harry called Mrs. Lee on the way back around the island. “If it’s OK, I’ll just keep him with me tonight. He’s pretty tuckered out.”

“Well, technically, Harry, I’m not supposed to let you do that, but I guess it’s alright. I’ll see you in the morning then.”

“We’ll be there.”

Being careful not to wake the sleeping child, Harry gently scooped him up and carried him to the apartment.

As they approached the door, however, they heard a crash from inside which caught their attention. Harry handed Mikeal to Moira, "Take him back to the home please. Draco..." But Draco already had his wand out.

The two of them nodded to each other and pushed the door open. Lucius Malfoy stood in middle of the kitchen. He looked at the two of them, waved his wand and sent a drawer of silverware flying, then smirked.

"Isn't this convenient; I go looking for one and I get two; a blood traitor and the Twit-Who-Lived. Now, how did I get so lucky?" Lucius sneered. "You have saved me so much trouble; how kind of you."

"If you think that I'm a blood traitor, you have an awfully warped meaning of the word."

A look that Harry couldn't identify, passed between the two Malfoy's. "Silence you insignificant insolent child!"

"So insignificant that I got you put in Azkaban. Don't cross me, Lucius."

Harry rolled his eyes, but didn't say anything.

Lucius turned his attention to Harry. "I imagine that you are quite pleased with yourself. You managed to defeat the greatest wizard that ever lived; someone who would have brought unity to the wizarding world. "

"I'm not going to argue with you, Lucius. We will never agree. The only thing I want to talk to you about is the fact that you are ransacking my kitchen. I mean, you are making a mess that I have to clean up. What's the sense in that?"

Lucius laughed. "You've learned to play the game well, Mr. Potter, but I can't help but think that you are just stalling for time. You don't even have your wand out! Are you that confident, or that foolish?"

“I would suggest that you not test me, Lucius.”

With the speed of light, Lucius had the wand in his hand, pointed at the two of them.

“What do you want, Lucius?” Harry seemed nonchalant as he spoke; but in reality Draco knew that Harry was drawing his powers in for a battle. It wasn't well known that Harry had perfected his use of wandless magic. Draco had seen him use it on several occasions during missions for the Ministry.

“Avada...”

Several things happened in quick succession. With a speed born of his Auror training, Draco yelled “Impedimenta,” slowing Lucius down in mid-sentence. Then he disarmed his father with a quick “Expelliarmus.”

Harry dove to the side and quietly started a spell that surrounded Lucius in a series of colorful streams, and encased him in a swirling cocoon of color that effectively rendered him immobile. Harry took his wand out so as not to give away the fact that he was capable of wandless magic.

Draco pointed his wand at his father, “Finite” taking the Impediment curse off. He then looked at Harry, “So, now what do we do with him?”

Harry looked at the mess that Lucius had made, “Can we make him clean this mess up? I spent an entire day cleaning up and getting this kitchen organized!”

Draco looked disgusted. “Will you get serious please!”

“I suppose we could floo the Ministry and have them come get him.”

Draco huffed. “The Ministry! They're the ones who let him go in the first place! What are they going to do?” Draco ranted. “I'll tell you exactly what they will do; they will slap his hand and let him go again. Mark my words, Potter; we are going to end up dealing with him

ourselves. It's better to get it over with now and put him out of our misery!"

"You are talking about murder, Draco. No!"

"But you...."

"NO! I will not be party to murder. I'm Flooing the Ministry, end of discussion."

Draco shook his head and mumbled under his breath. "Stupid Gryffindor! Mark my words Potter; you are going to regret that decision one day. You are so predictable. It's a wonder that the bad guys didn't kill you at some point." Draco sighed. "So what do we do with him in the mean time? Stand him up in the corner like some sort of bizarre wall hanging? You are bloody mental, Potter."

Harry looked at the immobile form of Lucius Malfoy, "I know, we could put a few plants around him and pretend that he is a fountain. We could even make him spit water."

Draco looked at him and rolled his eyes. "Potter..."

Harry laughed. "I'm kidding Malfoy, kidding! Do we have any Floo powder?"

"Muggle flat, Muggle area, Potter, no fireplace! Any other bright ideas?"

"I'll Apparate. Don't do anything stupid. I'll be back in a little while."

Lucius began to struggle against the glowing ropes and Harry shook his head. "If you know what is good for you, Lucius, you will stop struggling. Those are constrictor bonds. The more you struggle, the tighter they get. It's a little trick that I worked up while on assignment for the Ministry. The red ones are particularly nasty. They like to cut off air supply. You see how they are prominent around your chest, throat and even under your nose? You are warned. If you choose to ignore my warning...well, it won't be pretty."

“Draco, why don’t you float him onto one of the beds and make him as comfortable as possible, this could take a while.”

“Make him as comfortable...have you gone around the bend. Next you will be suggesting a lovely little tea party with lemon biscuits.”

Harry laughed. “Not hardly, Draco, I hate lemon biscuits.” Harry shook his head, “I’ll be back.” He left the two of them with a pop.”

At the Ministry, he went to the office of the Minister of Magical Law Enforcement; Auror division. He headed straight to Davis Millson’s office.

When Davis saw him, he ran over to shake his hand. “Harry, it’s good to see you. Have you finally come to your senses and come back to work?”

“Now, Davis, don’t give me a hard time. I told you before I left that that was my last mission.”

“Well – if you ever want to come back, the door is always open, you know.”

“Thanks, I appreciate that but I have other responsibilities now. I’m adopting a Muggle boy and I won’t be leaving him anytime soon.”

“A Muggle? Well, yes, you would, wouldn’t you?” He sighed. “It’s the wizarding world’s loss. Congratulations, Harry. I think that you will make a wonderful father. So, what can I do to help you?”

“Well, you can help me with the fact that I have Lucius Malfoy tied up in my flat in Hawaii. He broke into my house with the intent to kill Draco. I don’t think that he knew that I lived there as well.”

“Merlin’s ghost, Harry, even a half a continent away, you are still getting into trouble.”

Harry smiled and spread his hands. “C’mon Davis, would you expect any less from me? Trouble follows me. You know that!”

Davis thought for a moment then looked at Harry. "I can send some Aurors, but you have to know that because Hawaii is a US state, we have to involve the US Secretary of Magic."

"You're winding me up, Davis; I've got Lucius Malfoy tied up in my living room. What in the bloody hell am I supposed to do with him until the US Secretary can get there – use him as a coat rack?"

"Hold on, Harry!" Davis started laughing; it will only take a minute to contact him." Davis went over to the fireplace and threw in a bit of Floo powder. "Davis Millson for Thaddeus Mihelcic!" He looked at Harry. "Although, you know, I can't think of a better use for Lucius Malfoy."

Harry chuckled.

After a moment, a woman's head appeared in the flames and looked around. "Davis, how are you?"

"I'm wonderful, Samantha, and you?"

"Oh, I can't complain."

"Samantha, is Tad in?"

"Sorry, Davis, the only reason I'm here is that I am finishing up paperwork. Its 7:00 a.m. here you know."

"I keep forgetting the bloody time change. Sam, I really need to talk to him. Can you help me out?"

"I'll do what I can, Davis. Don't leave the office. I'll have him Floo you back."

"That's my girl. Thanks Sam. Oh and Sam, have you met Harry Potter, he..."

"Harry Potter?" Harry saw her head spin around and look at him.

He smiled at her. "Good morning, ma'am."

"It's good to meet you, Mr. Potter."

“And you as well.”

“Does this matter concern you, Mr. Potter?”

“Call me Harry; and yes it is a very urgent matter that needs immediate attention.”

“Give me ten minutes, Harry. He isn’t due in until 9:00 but I’ll Floo him at home. Oh, and call me Sam.”

“Thank you, Sam. I appreciate your help in this.”

With that, her head disappeared with a small pop. “Well, I guess there is nothing else to do but wait. You look knackered, Harry; can I offer you a cup of coffee?”

“Absolutely, it’s been a long day.”

“Well, tell me about this little boy of yours.”

He laughed. “He is the most wonderful kid.” He reached into his pocket and pulled out a picture of Mikeal. “Here, this is him. He’s a rambunctious four-year-old. The first day I met him, he kicked me.” Harry laughed again.

“He has taken the shambles of my life and put them all together in a neat little package. When I left here, I didn’t care about anything or anyone. He changed all that.” Harry shook his head in disbelief. “It’s amazing really. I love that kid more than I have loved anyone in a very long time.

Then he sighed. “Davis, I have to get this Lucius Malfoy thing cleared up. I won’t put Mikeal in danger. It would be just his style to attack my son to get to me. I won’t allow that to happen. If I have to, I will...”

“Davis, are you there?”

Harry and Davis turned toward the fireplace. “Tad, sorry to disturb you at this ungodly hour.”

"That's all right, Davis, I was up any way. So, Sam tells me that Mr. Potter has a problem that somehow concerns us."

"Tad, may I introduce you to Harry Potter. I'll let him fill you in on the problem."

"Nice to meet you, Mr. Potter."

"And you, sir. May I ask, have you heard of Lucius Malfoy?"

"Vaguely, I know that he was your Voldemort's right hand man."

Harry stiffened a bit at having Voldemort referred to as 'his' anything, but he let it pass. "Well, I'm not sure if Lucius was his right hand man but he was at least in the upper echelon of his followers. Just over five years ago, Lucius was confined in Azkaban prison. The Ministry, in all its wisdom..." Harry looked at Davis accusingly, "...released him in March. He went looking for his son because Draco had assured his stay in prison. About an hour ago, I came home with Draco, we're flatmates, Lucius Malfoy was ransacking our flat. If Draco hadn't cast the Impediment curse, he would have hit me with the Avada Kadavra. I used a binding curse on him and he is now in my flat tied up."

"That's very interesting, Mr. Potter, but why does that involve the United States Secretary of Magic?"

"My flat is in Hawaii."

"Oh...I see. All right. I'll start extradition proceedings."

"How long will this take?"

"I think that we should be able to get it taken care of in a day or two Mr. Potter."

Harry looked disgusted. "I did say that he is in my flat didn't I, Mr. Mihelcic?"

"Mr. Potter, I may be a wizard, but I am not a miracle worker. These things take time."

"I understand that sir; but what do I do in the mean time? Is there a contingency of your office that can take him into custody?"

"Not in Hawaii, Mr. Potter. Please be assured that we will push this through as quickly as possible."

Harry mumbled under his breath. "A fat lot of good that's going to do me." Then louder he said, "Sir, do you have any suggestions about what I can do with him in the mean time?"

"Stun him!"

Harry looked at him, disbelieving what he had just heard. He glanced over at Davis to verify it. Davis rolled his eyes and shrugged.

"Stun him?"

"Yes, stun him. That would take care of the problem."

Harry looked at him. "Are you listening to yourself...sir? This is bloody fantastic. Davis, are you hearing this?" He looked at Tad Mihelcic, "You do realize just how ridiculous this is don't you? You are asking me to keep a dangerous criminal in my flat, putting my son in danger as well as my friends. Let me ask you sir, would you allow this to happen to you and your family?"

Mihelcic looked angry. "I'm sorry, Mr. Potter, my hands are tied. I will get it taken care of as soon as possible. That is just going to have to be good enough!" He turned and looked at Davis, "Davis, I'll be in contact," and with a small pop was gone.

Harry ran his hands through his hair. "Bloody Americans!"

"All right, Harry, let's look at our options. You and Draco both being Aurors can take him into custody and hold him until extradition..."

"Which, Davis, seems to be exactly what is happening."

Davis held up a hand to stem the flow. He knew that Harry was getting ready to let loose.

“...or HARRY...I can send other Aurors to your flat to watch him for you and you can get on with your life.”

“And what about my son?”

“Look, Harry, it’s only a couple days at most...”

“I should have listened to Draco. All right, Davis, just do this as soon as possible. I’ll conjure a fireplace so that you can contact me. Merlin’s beard, bureaucrats are unbelievable. I better go help Draco out.” Harry quickly scribbled down his address and handed it to Davis, “Do me a favor will you, Davis. Get me connected to the Floo network. I need to get back.”

“Sure thing, Harry, and hey, don’t worry.”

Harry rolled his eyes and left without another word. He Apparated into his apartment and found Draco sitting on the sofa watching T.V.

“Hey, so where did you put him?”

“Well, don’t get mad, but I put him in your room.”

“Why mine? He’s your father.”

“Well, with Moira and all, I didn’t want to make her uncomfortable you know.”

“Oh, but it’s all right for me to be uncomfortable?”

“Yeah,” Draco said with all sincerity. “Moira took Mikeal back to the home. He’s fine. What happened? Are they coming to get him?”

“You aren’t going to believe it.”

Draco huffed. “Oh yeah? Try me.”

“Well, do you want the good news, or the bad news first?”

“Give me the good news.”

“Lucius is going to be extradited back to the UK.”

“OooKay...then what’s the bad news?”

“It’s going to take the States two days to get their act together.”

“Two days?” Draco’s voice cracked. “We can’t keep him here for two bloody days. He is already trying everything he can think of to get out of the spell you cast.”

“They suggested that we stun him.”

Draco exploded. “For two days?”

“Hey, don’t kill the messenger. I tried everything I could think of to speed things up. The worst part about all of this is that if the courts get wind of this, it could mess things up for Mikeal and me.”

Draco sighed. “Well, we are going to have to deal with the prat.”

“I’ll go. I’ve got to do something with those wards anyway. We can’t leave him tied for two days.”

Draco snorted. “Why not.”

Harry rolled his eyes but didn’t say anything. He walked into his room looked directly at Lucius. “Well Lucius, it looks like you may be a guest here for a day or two, so...” Harry pointed his wand at his prisoner, “...Stupify.” Then he cast a spell that released the colored ropes from around Lucius’ body but began to reform themselves into a cell with bars. Once the cage was finished he conjured a chair. Then he pointed his wand at Lucius. “Lucius, I’m going to undo the ‘Stupify’ spell.” He pointed to the bars. “These are the same bonds that were wrapped around you. If you try to escape, they will immediately wrap around you again. At least this way you can move around. I warn you, don’t try anything stupid.”

Harry pointed his wand at his prisoner. “Finite.”

Lucius looked at Harry through the colorful bars. “Well, Mr. Potter, I suppose you feel very proud of yourself. You’ve managed to capture me.”

Harry did his best to ignore his unwanted guest as he gathered pillows blankets and bed clothes and headed toward the door.

“And what about me?”

Harry stopped and turned back to his prisoner. “What about you, Lucius?”

“Are you going to leave me with nothing to at least lie down with?”

“Bet on it!” Harry walked out and slammed the door.

He sank down onto the couch and sighed with relief. The sun was just starting to show over the horizon and he knew an exhaustion that he hadn’t felt in a very long time. He collapsed into the pillow. All he wanted was a couple of hours of sleep.

It wasn’t to happen, however. He was brought bolt upright by a knock at the door.

With a tired groan, he stood and ran a hand through his hair.

The person knocked again. “Hang on, hang on a second.” Harry was not prepared for what he saw when he opened the door. “Ginny?”

Her smile was brilliant. “Hello, Harry.”

He stood in the door in shock, unable to say anything.

“Ahh, Harry, can I come in?”

He jumped. “Oh...ah...yeah...sorry,” he stepped aside and let her pass before closing the door.

She turned and looked at him admiringly. “Forgive me for saying so Harry, but you look like hell!”

“Yeah, well, it’s been a very long day. Can I get you a cup of coffee, Gin? Maybe tea...”

“No, thank you, not right now, Harry. I’m here because of your little problem. I’m supposed to stay here and wait while the US authorities decide to dig their fingers out of their collective noses.”

Harry chuckled. “Couldn’t have put it better myself.”

“So where is he?”

“In here.” Harry led the way to his room and opened the door. Lucius Malfoy lay curled up on the carpet apparently asleep.

“What are the bars?”

“Constrictor Wards. If he tries to escape, they wrap around him.”

“Ingenious, I’ve never heard of them before.”

“I developed them when I was working for the Ministry.” Harry closed the door again, stifled a yawn and they walked back out to the living room. “Have a seat Gin.” He moved the bed things to give her room.

“So Gin, you’re working for the ministry now?”

“Yes, they gave me some sort of fancy title, ‘Special Liaison for International Magical and Muggle Relations’. What it boils down to is that when there is a problem that needs smoothed over, they send me in.”

“And does this situation need smoothed over?”

“Of course it does. The Ministry released Lucius Malfoy from Azkaban, knowing that he had made threats against Draco’s life. Essentially, they set a known killer on one of their own and the American Special Forces had to be called in. There is a lot of embarrassment on the part of the Ministry right now, and they want me to fix it.”

“I assume that by ‘American Special Forces’ you mean the American version of our Aurors.”

Ginny looked disgusted. "Yes, and oooh they are an arrogant bunch. I would like to just wash my hands of the lot of them. However, because we are in the States..."

"They have to be involved." Harry finished for her. "Typical, you know I'm pretty disgusted with the whole thing. Draco wanted to take care of it himself, and me, being the noble prat that I am said 'no'. Now I'm stuck with a raving lunatic in my bedroom waiting for the bureaucrats to get off of their arses and do something." Harry chuckled and shook his head. "It boggles the mind. It is good to see you though, Gin. How have you been?"

Ginny stood and walked around the room and looked at the pictures of Harry and Mikeal, Draco and Moira and anything else that caught her eye before she answered Harry's question. "Harry, I volunteered to take this assignment. They were going to send Terry Quil, but I did everything in my power to cajole them into picking me. I wanted to see you."

"I'm glad you did, I've missed you."

"No, you don't understand Harry. I have something to tell you that I should have told you years ago." She turned to look at him. "Back when we were all still in school, when you started dating Hermione..."

"Ginny, I don't want to talk about..."

"No Harry, let me finish. When you were dating Hermione, I was very much in love with you. Then I saw just how happy you two were together. It seemed that there was no better match ever made. So I kept my feelings my little secret.

"When you two got married, I smiled and acted like I was happy for you. I wasn't. I was angry. I was angry with myself for never telling you how I felt; and angry with you for not knowing anyway.

"After the wedding I tried to put it behind me. I buried my feelings and began dating other men; but none of them met my interest.

"Then this whole thing with Ron...Harry, I could have killed him. I was that angry with him for hurting you. I didn't understand how he could

have treated you that way. He was supposed to be your best mate. I still don't understand it. And Hermione...I'm not going into that. It's not important."

She shook her head. "You haven't been around. You don't know what kind of waves Ron's actions caused. Mum and dad practically disowned him. Hermione is not allowed to come to the Burrow. You are as good as a son to mum and dad and they feel like this is an entirely family matter. They miss you and are worried about you, you know."

She continued, not giving Harry a chance to say anything. "No one in the family is going to their wedding. We are all thoroughly disgusted with the situation." She paused and sighed then looked at him, "I'm not saying any of this very well, Harry. I'm rambling on and on and not..."

Harry stood and put his hands on her shoulders. "Gin, are you asking me to forgive the two of them? Because if you are, I...can't."

"She shook her head. "No, Harry, I would never ask that of you." She sighed, "I'm not saying this very well. She looked into his eyes, then leaned closer and pulled his face down until she could press her lips to his."

Harry's eyes flew open in surprise, then his hands slid off of her shoulders and up into her hair as he deepened the kiss.

When they parted he looked into her eyes and there were tears there. "I'm sorry, Harry. I shouldn't have caught you off guard like that, but I promised myself that I would let you know how I felt about you this time. If I hadn't, I never would have forgiven myself. Now you know."

He looked a little taken aback. "Yeah, now I know," he repeated softly. He ran a thumb across her cheek to wipe a tear that had trickled from her eye. "Was I always so dense?"

Ginny laughed. "Yes, Harry, you were."

They came apart at a light clearing of a throat. Draco walked into the room. "Well, if it isn't the Weaslette. How are you, Ginny?"

"I'm fine, Draco, and you?"

"Couldn't be better. Harry, you look like hell. Have you gotten any sleep at all?"

He shook his head. "Not really, no."

"Harry..." Ginny said as she touched his arm, "...you get some sleep. I'll go sit in your room with Malfoy."

Harry nodded. "Any ideas on how long it will take someone to get here?"

Ginny shook her head. "Not a clue."

He watched Ginny and Draco go into his room and he went to the sofa. He lay down and felt warmth envelope him as he relaxed; but he didn't sleep. His mind was going so fast that sleep, as tired as he was, eluded him.

He was thinking about Ginny, and that kiss. As brief as it had been, it had been...wonderful.

He was in the midst of a battle. His mind was telling him that it was time to move on, and get back to life, but his heart was too frightened to take the chance. He realized that he was tired of being alone. He had a lot of concerns though. He wondered how Ginny would react to Mikeal and how Mikeal would react to her.

He fought with his mind. Ginny had never hurt him before, why would she come so far out of her way if she intended to hurt him.

She is Ron's sister he argued with himself. I didn't think Ron had it in him to betray me, but he sure proved me wrong on that count.

After an hour, Harry sat up and tried to clear his head. He ran a hand through his already messy hair, then went to the kitchen and made a pot of coffee.

He looked up when he heard his bedroom door open. He smiled at Ginny. "Harry, I thought you were going to sleep."

“Couldn’t. I’ve got too much on my mind.”

She laughed lightly. “Some things never change, do they?”

“No, they don’t. You want a cup of coffee?”

“Sure.”

He got another cup from the cupboard and poured them both a cup. They sat in silence for a while.

Suddenly they both spoke at the same time. “Harry.” “Ginny”

They laughed and said again at the same time, “you first.”

Ginny giggled. “You first, Harry.”

“OK, Gin, I’ve been thinking about what you said.” Then he laughed, “...and that kiss!” He shook his head. “That was...” he didn’t continue as he tried to put his feelings into words.

“The kiss was what, Harry?”

He looked at her. “Incredible, Ginny. That kiss was incredible. But I have to tell you. It’s really hard for me right now to trust anyone.”

“That’s understandable, Harry, considering what happened. I’m sure the fact that I’m Ron’s sister, doesn’t help. I’ve thought about all of that before I decided that I would tell you how I feel. All I can say Harry is that I am not Ron. And though you only have my word to go on right now, I will never hurt you.”

“I want to believe you, Gin. I really want to. It’s just that...”

“Harry, I’m not asking you to marry me.” Then she laughed. “Not yet at least.”

Harry smiled and Ginny continued. “All I’m asking is to let me help you to trust again. One step at a time.”

Harry thought for a moment. “What commitments do you have at home?”

“The usual, work, family.”

“If I asked you to stay after this is all over, could you do it?”

“After I tie up loose ends, absolutely.”

“I think that I would like that a lot, Gin. All I ask is that you are patient with me. It may take me a while to...”

“...get into the swing of things again?” Ginny finished for him.

“Yeah.”

“I’m patient.”

“You’ll have to be.”

The bedroom door opened again. “He says he’s hungry and he has to go to the loo!” Draco walked into the kitchen and poured himself a cup of coffee.”

Then they heard a voice from the makeshift fireplace. “Harry?”

Harry went to the living room and knelt down. “Hello, Davis, tell me you have good news for me.”

“Yes, the American’s should be there...” He stopped when the doorbell rang, “...I would guess now!”

Harry looked over his shoulder as Draco went to the door. Then he turned back to Davis. I’ll be in contact. Thanks, Davis.”

Draco went to the door. Two men stood there. Both were dressed similarly. Both wore tight blue jeans, a tight black T-shirt, cowboy boots and hats. One was tall with hair as dark as Harry’s and eyes the same shade as his hair. The other was a bit shorter with light brown hair and blue eyes.

Draco stared at them. “Yes?”

“Harry Potter?”

“Harry, it’s for you.”

Harry went to the door and the two men gave him an appraising look. With a smirk of superiority, the dark haired man said, “You Potter?”

Harry returned the favor and looked the two of them up and down before answering him. He looked at Draco and smirked and tipped his head toward the two at the door. Draco rolled his eyes and huffed before turning to walk away.

“Yeah, I’m Potter. And you are?”

“Thompson, he’s Pulciver. We’re Special Forces.”

Harry opened the door wider and let them in. “It’s about time.”

“So, where is the prisoner?”

“Follow me. He says he’s hungry and needs to visit the loo. Oh, and this is Ginevra Weasley, she is ‘Special Liaison for International Magical and Muggle Relations’. Harry held an arm out and Ginny stepped forward and nodded at the two of them without a smile.

“Well, aren’t you just a sight for sore eyes, Ginevra.” He reached a hand out to touch her shoulder but she stepped back. “If that hand comes anywhere near me, Thompson, you will pull back a bloody stump. Do you understand me?”

“And still full of fire, I see.”

“Just collect your prisoner. I will escort the three of you to New York where you will hand him over to the British Authorities.”

She turned and looked at Harry. He was amazed at the change. She was all business. “Mr. Potter, will you please take these...gentlemen...” she looked at Harry as if that term didn’t really apply, “... and remove the wards around Mr. Malfoy. I will contact the authorities and have them meet us at the designated point. Oh and you and Mr. Draco Malfoy will need to accompany us to give an account of the events.” She took a bit of floo powder and threw it into the fireplace and stated very clearly, “Davis Millson’s office.”

The tall Special Forces agent followed Harry into the room. Harry waved his wand and made the chair that Lucius was sitting on, vanish. Lucius gave an angry shake to his head and glared at the savior of the wizarding world. He waited for Lucius to straighten himself up before he caused the bars to bend themselves again around Lucius' body.

Thompson's smile was oily as he leaned toward Harry and whispered, "You know, Genevra has it bad for me."

Harry smirked. "Forgive my Britishness. It must be different here than at home. When a young lady threatens maiming, that generally means that she is *not* interested. But then..." Harry shrugged, "...like I said, it could be different here." He walked away and went into the loo to run a comb through his hair before having to leave with Ginny and company.

Ginny handed Harry and Draco the Apparation point written on a piece of paper. "I'll see you there. Give me several minutes to get Lucius contained before you come."

Harry only nodded. "I take it you've met that bloke before."

Ginny rolled her eyes. "He has got to be the most obnoxious of the lot of them. I'll tell you about it after we turn Malfoy over." She kissed him quickly on the cheek. "Merlin, I'll be glad to get this over with."

Harry looked up and noticed Thompson watching the two of them with a frown on his face. Harry smiled and held up his hands. "Gee, no bloody stumps. Go figure."

Thompson and Pulciver collected Lucius. Pulciver was examining Harry's wards. These are amazing, Mr. Potter. Are these your invention?

Harry nodded. "You will need to remind him not to struggle. They constrict when the person moves overly much. The red ones cut off air supply, the blue ones wrap around legs to prevent movement, the yellow are power wards that provide power to the red and blue."

"Amazing!"

“Pulciver, will you please quit fraternizing with the Brit.”

“The agent leaned over to Harry. “He can be such a jack ass sometimes. It is nice to meet you, Mr. Potter.” He held a hand out to Harry.

Harry took it. “You too, Pulciver, and call me Harry.”

“I’m Doug.”

“I’ll see you in New York then shall I?”

“We’ll be there.”

Harry and Draco watched as Ginny and the two agents Disapparated with Lucius in tow.

Draco turned to Harry. “You probably should call the home before you go. Mikeal will wonder where you are.”

“Good idea.”

Draco smirked. “Ginny, huh?”

Harry smiled slightly. “Yeah, well, we’ll see. I hope so; kind of; I think.”

“That’s what I like about you, Potter, your decisiveness.”

Harry rolled his eyes. “Let me call the home, then we can get this over with.”

Within a few minutes Harry and Draco arrived at the US Bureau of Magic in New York. They were met by Tad Mihelcic, the two agents, Ginny, Davis Millson, Kingsley Shacklebolt and Nymphadora Tonks.

“Tonks! It’s good to see you.” He hugged her and kissed her lightly on the cheek.

“Wotcher, Harry.”

“Kingsley, you’re looking good.”

“Never better, Harry. Never better.”

Tad Mihelcic got the groups' attention. “All right, down to business now. Mr. Potter, Mr. Malfoy, I need you to give a sworn statement to the assembled parties and sign the affidavit.”

Harry was sworn in first, then he gave his statement. As he spoke, a quick quotes quill took down every word. Then it was Draco's turn. He followed the same procedure that Harry had, looking suspiciously at the quick quill as he did. They both carefully read the statements that they had made, then signed the parchment.

While Draco was signing the statement, Harry went over to Davis. “Do I need to give you the counter spell for the wards?”

“Unfortunately, yes. We won't be able to take him to trial if he is not able to speak for himself. It is a shame really. They work so wonderfully.”

“I'll take that as a compliment.”

The whole ordeal took about a half-hour. Lucius glared at his son with a hatred that few could match. He was handed over to Kingsley and Tonks who, after exchanging farewells with Harry and Draco, Disapparated with Malfoy.

Doug stuck a hand out to Harry. “It's been a pleasure meeting you, Harry. I'd like to talk to you about those wards you created sometime. Very ingenious.”

“Any time, Doug. You know where I am. I'd be glad to show you.”

Thompson only glared at Harry, then smirked. He approached Ginny and dipped her and gave her a long sensual kiss. When he stood her back up he smirked again. Ginny looked dreamy then took out her wand. Suddenly bats were prominent on the gits face.

He screamed. “Get 'em off, get 'em off.”

Davis frowned at Ginny but she laughed. But at his continual stare she relented. “Oh, Davis, you are such a kill joy. Where's your sense

of humor?" She waved her wand and the bats disappeared. But she came closer to Thompson. "If you ever touch me again, Thompson, I'll hex your testicles into next week. Got it?"

He mumbled something to her that Harry couldn't hear, then looked at Doug. "Let's go, Pulciver."

Doug winked at Ginny. "Good for you, he deserves it."

"PULCIVER!"

"I'm coming, I'm coming. Bye y'all," Then they Disapparated.

Draco looked at Harry and Ginny. "I'm going back. I would suggest, Potter, that you stay here and take some time to...get to know the Weaslette again."

Ginny frowned. "Very subtle, Malfoy. You should mind your own business."

He shrugged. "Hey it's just a suggestion, OK?"

Ginny looked at Harry. "Sorry, Thompson always sets my teeth on edge."

Draco Disapparated and Harry looked at Ginny. "Are you hungry? We could get something to eat and talk."

"By the looks of you, Harry, you need to sleep. Why don't you Apparate home. I'll get some things tied up at the Ministry and the Burrow and I'll see you in a couple of days."

Harry gave a huge yawn. "Sleep, what a novel idea. Sounds good to me. By the way Ginny, good job on the hex." He said with a laugh.

Ginny frowned. "That git. I met him at the Wizarding Agencies Law Enforcement World Conference, and he was just as much of a prat then as he was this time. He seems to think that he is God's gift to witches."

"Doug seemed all right though."

She grinned. "Yeah? I didn't know you swung that way, Harry. I'd be careful of him too. He's probably after you, you charmer."

"Oh..." Then dawning hit. "OH! His eyes got wide and he shook his head. "Normally, I'd pick up on that sort of thing. I must really be tired."

Ginny laughed and patted his arm. Since you're here, why don't you get a hotel room for a couple days and I'll meet you back here."

"Sorry, Ginny, I can't do that. You know, we have a lot to talk about. On second thought, I think I would like to get something. At least a cup of coffee, I need to fill you in on some things before you leave."

"There's a little ersatz bistro just around the corner. It's extremely expensive and presumptuous, but at least the food is mediocre; interested?"

"Now how can I turn down an invitation like that? You make it sound so tempting."

She hugged him. "You always were a good sport, Harry. Let's go."

They walked out onto the street and were practically knocked over by pedestrians in a hurry to get where ever they were going. As a protective measure Harry took Ginny's arm and threaded it through his as they walked. "At least I won't loose you this way," he laughed.

It took them ten minutes to get to the end of the block and around the corner to the Bistro. When they arrived, Harry breathed a sigh of relief. I hate New York, do you know that?"

"You'll get used to it."

"Merlin, I hope not! I don't want to spend anymore time here than necessary. Here's a table." He pulled a chair out for her then went to the counter and ordered.

When he returned and sat down, Ginny was toying with the cloth napkin, then looked at her date. "So, how are you Harry?"

He laughed. "Better than I have been in a while actually. Hawaii has been good to me. Which actually brings me to one of the reasons that I wanted to talk to you before you went back to England.

He was a bit nervous. He didn't know why, really. He chocked it up to the string of events and pushed on. "I've spent the months that I've been in Hawaii, working at a Residence Children's Home."

Ginny grinned. "You are working with kids? Harry that's great! I can't think of anything better suited for you. Are you teaching them all sorts of magic?"

He grimaced a bit. "Muggle, Gin."

She looked surprised. "Oh! OK. That would explain the photos in your flat. None of them are moving. The little boy you are holding in them, is he one of the kids at the home?"

Harry nodded. "That's Mikeal. He's my son, Ginny. At least he will be soon. He's a fantastic kid. He's fun and rambunctious and..."

Ginny laughed. "Harry, I haven't seen you this excited for – years actually, now that I think about it."

Harry took a deep breath and leaned back in his chair and smiled. "Yeah, he is my whole life right now. Do you have any idea how utterly thrilling it is to have a little guy look up to you and call you 'daddy'?" Then he laughed. "Well, you know what I mean."

She giggled at Harry's light blush. Then he began telling her all about Mikeal. Twenty minutes latter he stopped and looked at her smile. "What?"

"He sounds wonderful, Harry. You don't need to worry you know. I like kids too."

He squeezed her hand from across the table. "Yeah, but if we were to get together, Gin, he would always come first." Then he stopped and shook his head. "Wait, that didn't come out right." He cupped her hand in both of his. "All of our decisions would have to involve him.

It's not like you are getting a single chap. Technically, I'm not anymore."

She smiled reassuringly at him. "Harry, it's all right. I love him already. Do you have a picture? I'd like to get a closer look.

Harry moved his chair closer and pulled out his wallet. Each of the accordion folded envelopes, held a picture of Harry's son.

Ginny studied the photos and smiled, looked up at Harry, then back at a picture, then at him again. "You know, he kind of looks like you."

Harry looked at the picture that she held. "Do you think so?"

Ginny looked into his eyes. She leaned over and kissed him lightly. "I think that you'll make a wonderful dad, Harry."

Harry was at a loss for words as he stared into her eyes, so he squeezed her hand and whispered, "Thanks, Gin."

Then the spell was broken when the waitress brought the food Harry had ordered, and they both leaned back in their chairs. But Harry continued to smile, "I'm also looking for a house. I intend to stay in Hawaii. It's my home now. I'm not saying that I will never visit, but this is where I will live."

Ginny seemed to consider this for a moment. "You know Harry, that if you intend to stay in the states, you will need to become a citizen here."

"I know. First things first, though; Mikeal's adoption, then my citizenship. I also intend to continue working at the Children's Home.

"Then there is the most important thing, Mikeal is a Muggle. I haven't decided yet whether or not to tell him about being a wizard. How would you feel about not using magic?"

She seemed surprised by the question. "You mean ever?" At Harry's nod she looked off to the left and stared at a picture on the wall, not really seeing it. "Hmm, I can't honestly say, Harry, but if you want my

opinion, I think you need to tell him. You don't want to face a situation in the future when he accidentally finds out and goes mental about it."

Harry nodded. "Yeah, I've thought about that, but how do you tell a four year old 'hey mate, just for your information, your daddy is a wizard. Oh, and, by the way you aren't able to do all these neat things.' I don't know which would be worse."

Ginny took his hand and squeezed. "Most wizarding children don't know about being a wizard until about four years old, Harry."

"Yeah, but they grow up knowing about it. They are used to seeing unusual things. What if..."

She smiled. "Harry, you can't possibly anticipate every situation that will come up in Mikeal's lifetime. All you can do is be a loving parent, be as honest with him as you can and take things as they come." She thumbed through the pictures again searching for a particular one. She pointed out a photo where Mikeal was looking at Harry like he could create the stars. "Look at this picture, Harry. Mikeal loves you. That's enough. Tell him."

Harry leaned back in his chair. "I'm just not sure, Gin. I've gone back and forth on this question. Sometimes I think that it's better to just turn my back on the whole thing. No magic of any kind."

"That won't make the wizarding world go away, and you know it."

Ginny's voice was a little hard and Harry looked up at her in surprise.

She sighed. "I'm sorry, Harry, I've over stepped..."

But Harry stopped her, "No, no you haven't Gin. You're right. I mean, look at the situation that brought us together. Lucius Malfoy is like a bad knut. He keeps turning up." Then he sighed and rubbed his eyes. "I'm just too tired right now to think coherently."

Ginny studied him as he sat quietly thinking. It was a long moment before he looked up at her again. "Ginny, how long will it take you to wrap things up at home?"

She looked into those brilliant green eyes and smiled, "A few days, less if I recruit mum's help.

"Are you sure about this, Gin? I mean, I'm making some pretty heavy demands on you. And according to Draco, I'm impossible to live with. I'm moody and self-absorbed. Are you sure that I'm worth all the trouble?"

She smiled gently at him. "First of all, Harry, consider the source...Mr. moody and self absorbed himself. If anyone is moody and self-absorbed, it's Draco. Second, you are not demanding anything. You've told me the state of things; you've been nothing but honest. Can I tell you something?"

Harry nodded.

"Even though you don't realize it, Harry, you are worth it and so much more. You have been beaten down, abused and misused all of your life. You have been the wizarding worlds golden boy since you were one year old. You've had expectations piled on you that would have broken a less strong wizard. And still you came out of it kind and loving. It's about time that you realized just how wonderful you really are. And just for your information, Harry Potter, there is only one thing that I absolutely will not tolerate. This self-effacing stuff will stop. I will not allow anyone to put you down, not even you. You got that?"

Harry grinned at her sheepishly. "Yes, ma'am."

"Good! Now, you are dead on your feet. Get home and get some sleep, or I'll kick your arse."

This time he laughed. "Yes, ma'am, anything else?"

She thought for a moment. "No, I'll see you as soon as possible. Are you going to stay connected to the Floo network?"

He grinned and squeezed her hand. "I will for you. And, Gin, the custody hearing is in a week. If you can be here for that I would really appreciate it."

She nodded. "I'll try my best."

They stood and walked the short distance to the Bureau. Ginny kissed him lightly then stepped into the fireplace, smiled again and announced clearly, "The Burrow, Ottery St. Catchpole, UK" and with that she was gone.

Harry followed her example and announced, "Harry Potter's flat, Hawaii." Once home, he dragged himself to his bedroom. When his head hit the pillow he was asleep.

Chapter 10 – A Ghost of a Chance

“Daddy!”

Harry was brought abruptly awake by a weight being dropped directly in the middle of his stomach.

“Daddy, why are you sleepin’?”

Harry groaned then growled playfully and grabbed his son around the waist and started tickling him.

Mikeal hugged him and kissed his daddy’s head.

Harry ruffled his hair. “Hey there, mate, what are you doing here?”

“Uncle Dray bringed me.”

Harry looked around and saw Draco leaning in the door way, arms folded across his chest with a big smile on his face. “Hey, Dray, what time is it?”

“About 4:00.”

Harry groaned and fell back into the pillows. “I’ve only been asleep an hour!”

“Daddy, Uncle Dray bringed me to see you. He said you were a lazy git. What’s a git, daddy?”

Harry snorted. “A really great person, Mikeal; someone that Uncle Dray worships.”

There was a huff from the direction of the door. “In your dreams, Potter.”

He sneered at his flatmate. “I’d have to sleep to have dreams.”

“Uncle Dray said you were going to take me to see a house.”

“He did?” Harry looked at Draco in question.

“Yeah, we found a house near here but we had to jump on it. According to the real estate agent, there were a lot of people looking at it.”

“But I’ve only been asleep for an hour, Malfoy.”

“Quit whining and get up.”

Harry fell back into the pillows again and Mikeal laid his head on Harry’s chest.

“You wanta take a nap, mate?”

“Nuuhh. Uncle Dray says you are going to buy me a house. Can we go see the house? Please, daddy?”

Harry groaned. “OK, OK. You know, Uncle Dray is a royal pain in the ars...uh...backside.”

Harry got up, splashed some cold water on his face, changed clothes and met Mikeal, Draco and Moira in the living room. “OK, let’s go.”

They all piled into Draco’s car and headed to the house. The real estate agent was already there waiting for them. They got out of the car, looked at the outside of the house, and stared dumbfounded. The lawn was over grown and dry. The shingles were falling off the roof and there was an obvious large hole in it. The windows were broken and the cement walk was cracked with big chunks missing all together.

All four of them stood there and stared at the house in disbelief and turned as one to look at the real estate agent.

“Harry broke the stunned silence. “You’re having me on!”

She looked confused. “What do you mean?”

Moira looked at Draco. “Ah...love, let me guess; the ad said ‘fixer upper’ didn’t it?”

“Yeah, how did you know?”

“Honey, that’s real estateese for ‘you have to work like hell to be able to live in it.’ She turned to the agent. “Thank you for your time, but I don’t think he’s interested, are you Harry?”

“Ahh, no. Ms...I’m sorry, what is your name again?”

“Davilene Makilahana.”

“Ms. Makilahana, it’s one of those things that when I see it, I will know it. I want something big. Big enough for my son to play in and explore. Made of stone, preferably with large grounds...”

Draco leaned over and whispered, “Ahh Harry, you are describing Hogwarts.”

He looked at Draco. “And your point is...?” Then a look of dawning came over him. “Oh yeah...” He turned to the real estate agent again, “...and parapets. Lots and lots of parapets.”

Draco rolled his eyes. “You do realize that we are in Hawaii don’t you? Not Britain?”

Moira looked at Harry with humor. “You may not find that here, Harry.”

The real estate agent interrupted, “Ahh...I wouldn’t say that exactly.”

Harry directed all of his attention to Ms. Makilahana. “Yes?”

“Well, I may have the home you are looking for, but I doubt that you would want to even look at it. They say it is haunted.”

Harry, Draco and Moira all looked at each other. “Haunted?”

“Yes, I’ve heard tell that the last people in there lasted less than 24 hours. You may not want to bring a little boy in there,” she whispered.

Harry looked at the other two, then back at the dark haired woman. “I...ahh...don’t believe in ghosts...” With a glance at his companions he then continued, “...how soon can we look at it?” Harry asked smiling.

She shrugged. "Well, if you are sure. It is listed with another agency. I'll have to contact them and get the keys. Can I call you?"

"Absolutely! I look forward to hearing from you."

"Great."

Mikeal, who had not been listening to the adults, had been staring at the house in front of him with a dubious look. Finally he looked at Harry. "Daddy, I don't wanna live there."

"Me neither, mate. Let's go home, OK?"

"Can I stay with you, daddy?"

"Well we'll have to talk to Mrs. Lee first. Are you hungry, Miki?"

"Yeah."

Harry tapped Moira. "Let's go get him some dinner". She pulled Draco's arm. "C'mon Dray."

Draco was looking at the house now with disdain. "When I read the ad, it didn't sound anything like this." Draco's voice dripped with disgust.

She kissed his cheek. "This just isn't your cup of tea, Dray." They followed Harry and Mikeal back to the car and were soon speeding along the road, heading toward Mikeal's favorite restaurant, McDonald's.

They made arrangements with Mrs. Lee to keep Mikeal for the night and Harry stayed up reading to his son; but it wasn't long before Harry was asleep, leaning against the headboard.

Mikeal went out to the living room. "Uncle Dray, can I have a blanket please? Daddy fell asleep and I need to cover him up."

Moira laughed and grabbed a light blanket out of the closet and followed Miki into the room. She put her fingers to her lips and looked at Miki.

The two of them covered Harry up then Moira brought Miki out to the living room with her and Draco. "You want to watch a DVD, Mikeal?"

"Yeah, Sword in the Stone, that's my favorite. Daddy bought it for me. I'll get it."

Miki put the movie on and was soon engrossed in it.

&

Two days later, Ms. Mikilahana called and made an appointment for them to see the castle.

Harry and Draco stood outside the gated grounds and looked up at the old castle. Ms. Mikilahana was telling them the history of the old place but Harry only vaguely listened to the lady's story.

Draco however listened intently.

This is a 17th century authentic Scottish castle, once belonging to the Mac...something family. One of the family members took it apart stone by stone and brought it over here. After the castle was re-erected, its owner lived in it only two years, before dying in mysterious circumstances. It is said that it is he who haunts it."

"Let's go in then," Harry said in awe.

"Um...I...well..." the real estate agent muttered.

"Ms, Mikilhana, are you frightened to go in there?" Draco asked.

"Well, it's not that I'm frightened...no, of course not. Let's go in."

Harry smiled and patted her arm. "I tell you what, why don't you give me the keys and Draco and I will meet you at your office later. Would that be satisfactory?"

Harry chuckled when she let out a breath and relaxed a bit. "Yes, yes, that would be fine." They watched as she hurriedly got back in her car and drove off, obviously frightened to death of the old castle.

Harry looked at Draco. "Well, shall we?"

Draco nodded. "You do know, that you are the only one in the world that could move to Hawaii and find a Scottish castle, don't you? I don't know what kind of charmed star you live under, but I want some of it too.

"Yeah, my life is just peachy. Parents killed by a homicidal maniac, attacked by said maniac and lived, attacked again by..."

Draco put his hands up to stop the flow of words. "OK, Potter, spare me the litany if you please. So your life *isn't* charmed. However, not just anyone would be able to pull this out of their hat." Draco waved a hand toward the castle that they were approaching.

As they reached the door, Harry couldn't help feeling that he was home. He stuck the keys in the lock without pause and pushed the huge doors open.

It was dusty, dark and musty smelling from being closed up for such a long time. Harry took out his wand and whispered, "Lumos."

Following his lead, Draco did the same and the two of them walked further into the room.

Upon inspection, they could see that they entered a great hall. One that in its hey day would have sat at least a hundred men at great long tables. There were two enormous fireplaces; one at either end of the room complete with heavy metal spits that would have held and entire side of beef to feed the said 100 men. A giant cauldron, now rusted with age and obviously the late home of some creature, stood in the second fireplace.

Tapestries, now old and hanging in tatters, graced the stone walls. Harry approached one tapestry and studied it. It was the only one remaining that wasn't so faded that he couldn't make out the scene it depicted. It boasted a group of riders toasting their victory in what was obviously a successful boar hunt. Harry could just make out the hairy pig lying on the ground with long spears in its side.

The women in the scene were talking and building a gigantic fire, while the men drank from great tankards. Harry smiled. Then, he

would have sworn that the figures in the tapestry moved. He smiled again. "A wizards home." He whispered more to himself than to Draco.

He turned to point this out to Draco, but when he looked, Draco was not in the room. "Draco?"

Harry followed the obvious footprints left in the settled dust. They led to a small door. He pushed it open and found Draco exploring what was obviously the kitchens. There was another small door at the end of the large room. Harry went over and pushed at it but it was locked. He tried the many keys that Ms. Mikilahana had given him. With the last key, there was an audible click and Harry pushed hard at the door that was obviously blocked by something.

That something turned out to be the overgrown kitchen garden.

Returning to the room, the two of them examined the over-large pantry with what seemed like miles of dusty shelves.

They entered again into the great hall and walked back across the room toward the double set of stairs that led upward. Because of the darkness, they could not see where they led, but happily ascended the stone steps to continue their exploring.

It was at the top of the stairs that they met him; the ghost of the castle. The formless silver gray mist surrounded them, making the room drop at least 10 degrees. They smiled at each other and stood their ground.

There were suddenly great amounts of what sounded like chains rattling, moaning and general clichéd mayhem.

Draco called out with humor in his voice. "You might as well show yourself. We know what you are and you can't frighten us with these theatrics."

The noises abruptly stopped and a silvery mist without form appeared to be half leaning out of a nearby stone wall, with the other half still firmly ensconced.

Harry held out his wand to light the upstairs corridor. "You might as well come out and show yourself. We would really like to have a chat with you."

They watched as the mist drifted toward them and began to take shape. The visage was horribly disfigured with what appeared to be dripping silvery blood forming in puddles on the floor at their feet.

Draco rolled his eye. "Really sir, you will have to do much better than that. I know the Bloody Baron. And to tell you the truth, he is much more frightening.

Slowly the figure in front of them began to change. What they saw was a pleasant looking plump man, dressed in full highland regalia. On his face was a beard that grew from the sides of his face to the corner of his mouth. The rest of his face boasted what looked like a two-day stubble of growth.

The ghost reached down and pulled a misty dagger from his just as misty sock and brandished it at them.

"Really, is that any way to treat guests sir?"

"Ye noo be guests o' mine. Ye air no' welcoom 'er. Go noo, while ye still ken."

Then the ghost noticed that both of them had wands, and his demeanor changed. "Wizards be ye 'en?"

Draco answered. "Yes, we are both wizards."

"Aye, 'at I ken fer meself. Oo' be ye and wha' do ye wan'?"

Draco bowed with respect and motioned Harry to do the same. "My name is Draco Lucius Malfoy I, late of Great Brittan and heir to Malfoy Manor in Whiltshire, England. My companion is Harry James Potter, late of Surry and heir to the Potter, Black and Dumbledore fortunes. With deepest respect, we request an audience with the Laird of the castle; would that be you sir?"

“Aye, ‘tis me, but why wou’d I wan’ ta waste time talking to a couple o’ Dragoons.”

Harry looked confused, but Draco continued the conversation. “We are not Dragoons, milord.”

“Maybe, maybe no’ but ye are still English, and as sooch, no’ deserving o’ me trust.”

“I understand your hesitation milord. Trust is to be earned not given away. One who does is a fool; and you sir, I can tell, are no fool.

The ghost floated before him and gave a hint of a smile. “Ye’ve golden harp strings fer a tongue, bu’ be ‘at as it may...” The ghost turned to float away but Draco called him back. He bowed again. “With your permission, sir, my friend Harry and I would like very much to look at your castle.”

“Weeel noo, wou’d ye? An’ wha’ if ye be spies fer th’ crown?”

“Well sir, you should know that it is well over 250 years since King George II and his Dragoons occupied Scottish lands. Things have changed a bit. Scotland, while part of the United Kingdom is a separate entity from Great Brittan. And we have a Queen. Elizabeth by name, but if truth be told the monarchy ceased to rule many years ago in favor of Parliament. The Queen, forgive my saying so, is a ceremonial figurehead, though she is still treated with all deference due Royalty.

“Weeel noo, that is worth th’ hearin’. 250 years ye say? Ye ken ‘at ghosts don’ use time.”

“I suppose that I should have known that, but I didn’t.” Harry mused.

The ghost seemed to consider them for a long moment, then made a decision, “Weeel I suppose ‘at I cou’d gi’ ye a look ‘round th’ cahsel.” He gestured that they should follow. “Tis not a large cahsel on any account, but it sarved its parpose.”

One by one the ghost drifted through different rooms, puffing up his chest in pride at the exclamations from Harry and Draco. The castle

consisted of three wings all in amazingly good repair considering its age. Everywhere there were tapestries, old and faded, some in a state of fray that was beyond repair, but some proved not to be in too bad shape.

After about an hour and a half, the ghost brought them back to the great hall; having expounded greatly, the stories of the history of the castle, the lads that occupied it and the great and glorious battles that scared certain places.

Harry looked curiously at the specter in front of him. "Sir, you have been gracious to us today, but may I ask you one more thing?"

"Aye laddie, wha' ees it?"

"Sir, may I ask your name?"

"Me name? Oh, aye laddie. 'Tis a gran' an' glorious name it be, Laird Tavish Ewan Raibeart MacDougal." The ghost bowed to them. Then he smiled. "There be one moor room 'at ye shou'd see. Come wi' me."

The two of them followed along in the wake of the ghost. He led them into a large room at the top of the double stairs that had a door hidden by a large tapestry. It was a library. The shelves now stood empty, but it was obvious that at one time, books were in abundance. This was the only room that had any furniture in it at all.

Harry ran a reverent hand over the large desk, obviously newer than the house indicated. A large fireplace with an ornate mantle piece was the focal point of the room. It was green veined marble with a large mirror dustily reflecting the room.

Seeing the looks of delight on the two young men's faces, the Laird of MacDougal Castle took great pleasure in telling them of the stories of conquest of a gentler nature that happened within the four walls of this very room.

"O course, 'at was before I were wed, ye understand laddies."

Harry and Draco were finding it hard not to laugh at the stories of pursuit involving the young Laird and any servant girl that happened to catch his eye. They had transfigured odd pieces of debris into comfortable chairs while listening to their host and were now ensconced comfortably spending companionable time with an 18th century Scottish Laird.

After a pleasant hour of listening to the stories, Harry decided that they had built up a pleasant camaraderie with the old resident of MacDougal Castle and thought that it would be a good time to ask the question he was burning to ask. "Milord, my friend and I have a request to make of you. We would very much like to live here, if you permit it of course, and to move our families in as well. Would you be willing to allow that?"

"Allo' English to moove in 'ere? Weeel 'at be an unusual request, doon ye think?"

"Oh, not really. Think about it, how long has it been since you've had people to talk to; to tell your stories too? How long has it been since you've had stories told to you?"

"Ye make a goo' point laddie, bu' ye'r English."

"Well, if you can get past that little flaw in our personalities, it might be an interesting prospect, don't you think?"

The ghost laughed. "I wood swear ye ha' a bit o' th' Irish in ya as weeel. Ye air fair full 'o th' blarney."

Harry looked a little disappointed. "Well, think about it if you would please."

Draco asked another question that he was curious about. "I have a question for you milord. Am I correct in thinking that you were indeed a wizard?"

"Aye laddie, 'at I was."

"Well, from listening to your tales, it doesn't sound like you used magic very much, if at all. Is that right?"

“Ye’r verly perceptive fer a young lad; an’ ye wou’d be righ’ aboot ‘at. It were verly dangerous ta do magiks. No’ ever’ one in th’ cahsel ware o’ the wizard persuasion. Witch’s and wizard’s ware burnt at the toon square. Or so ‘ey thought. The ones ‘ey burnt ware no’ magikal a’ ‘tall. ‘Ey ware Muggles ‘oo ‘appen ta be a’ th’ wrong place a’ th’ wrong time.

“A verly bad business, i’twas. Weeel, i’ wou’d no’ due ta hav’ th’ Laird suspect of sooch a thing. Soo, those o’ us, ‘at ware blessed wi’ th’ magiks decided too no’ use eet. ‘At saved us a loot o’ problems.”

Both men nodded in understanding. Harry wondered how he would have felt, knowing that he a power available to him to help in certain situations and have his hands tied to do anything about it. He thought about his conversation with Ginny and the prospect of doing just that. He just shook his head. “That must have been frustrating for you.”

The ghost shrugged his shoulders. “Aye, i’twas at firs’, boot ‘en ye can ge’ used to anathin’ after a time.”

Harry nodded. “I suppose you’re right”

Then Draco looked at the specter. “How did the castle come to be here?”

The ghost puffed out his chest and rose into the air and looked angrier than Harry and Draco had seen him. He yelled “i’twas me own grandson; cowardly whoreson that he was, ‘at tore me ancestral home doon stone by stone and brought it to this place. I’tis a strange place ye know; full o’ strange folk.”

Harry smiled but Draco looked thoughtful then glanced up. “Milord, when did your grandson bring the castle here?”

The ghost floated sedately back down to eye level and gave Draco and Harry a measuring scrutiny, as if judging if they were worthy to hear the story.

“Weeel, being English laddies, I’m not sure if I should tell ye the story, ee’n though i’tis a story worth the hearin’.

Draco smiled at the mistrust of the ghost. "Aye, we are English, but not like George's Dragoons. In fact Harry and I went to school in Scotland. Perhaps you've heard of Hogwarts?"

"Aye, 'at I 'ave laddie, 'at I 'ave. Well then, I will tell ye, but 'tis a long story mind ye, and a gruesome one at 'at; if ye've the stomach fer it."

The two men leaned back in their chairs and settled in for a story in the old Scottish tradition; which meant a long drawn out yarn, expounding the bravery of the Scots, the cowardice of the English and always with the hero in grave peril.

"'Twas back in '43 when King George's Dragoons were plaguing the Scottish countryside. Bonnie Prince Charlie had left to exile in France, I was Laird of the MacDougal Clan, bu' ye know 'at already. Me lads had been up to a bit o' skullduggery, an' make no mistake. 'Ey...borrowed...a few kine from the Grant lads, an' why not, they ha' more 'n 'eir share, din' 'ey?"

Harry looked at Draco, "kine?"

Draco whispered, "They stole a herd of cattle."

The ghost heard him, "Oh aye, if ye wan' ta be...weeel, 'at's wha' th' English said. Ya see, there 'appen ta be a patrol from th' English garrison out roamin' the MacDougal lands. 'Ey came across me lads knowin' 'em to be MacDougal's by 'eir plaid and knowin' the mark on th' kine to be Grant. Well, 'ey ha' noo business meddlin' in Clan affairs di' 'ey?

"Me lads turned to give battle to the dratted red's. In the skuffle, one o'me youngest lads, almoos' a bairn, killed a regular. 'Ey made good 'eir escape an' made straight to Cahsle MacDougal wi' th' Dragoons givin' chase fer all 'ey were worth.

"Th' cahsle gave a goo' fight, an' make noo mistake aboot 'at. Weeel, tis ner goo' when ye battle 'th Dragoons. Sooner 'er later 'ey make ye pay. Noo I woul' ner ha' given 'em wee Deryk, 19 'e was wi' jus' a wee bit 'o fuzz aboot 'is face; but he be a MacDougal through and through. Verly proud I was of 'im. 'E walked oot 'o th' cahsle under a whi' flag an' gave 'imself to the soldiers.

“Ey built a pillory righ’ ‘er en th’ cahsle groun’s. Th’ coptin took ‘im prisoner an’ looked ‘at my lads an’ me ‘er in th’ yard an’ said, “This man is guilty o’ murder on a King’s man. Therefore, he will be beaten at yon pilary upon th’ back wi’ 100 stripes o’ th’ cat.

“Do ye know ‘at when a cat hits yer back, ye can hear the skin break apar’. Weeel I don’ min’ tellin’ ye lads ‘at I was a strong man an’ coo’ stan’ quite a lot ‘o th’ torture meself. Bu’ to watch me bairn...” The ghost shook his head sadly and appeared to have great silvery tears fall on his great coat, “...let’s jus’ say ‘at me strength ha’ a breakin’ point.

“After aboot 20 stripes, it was all I coul’ stan’. Noo me an’ me lads ha’ been disarmed and forced ta watch, as a lesson to further lawbreakers. Wha’ they din’ know was that I still ha’ me sgian dubh in me sock. In one move, I took the sgian dubh an’ threw it at th’ coptin. It hit ‘im in the chest an’ he fell straight like to th’ groun’.

“Then a battle broke ou’. Me lads din’ have much ‘o a chance thoo. We was mos’ly unarmed. I caught a musket ball straigh’ throo th’ heart...” The ghost pulled open his shirt to reveal a gaping hole right where his heart would have been.

Both Harry and Draco grimaced,

“...an’ died righ’ there. Now me bairn was still chained to th’ pillary an’ me lads spent ‘er blood to kee’ ‘im livin’ for ‘e was noo Laird.

“One o’ th’ Dragoons saw ‘is chance an’ too’ a musket and shot me bairn in th’ back. He was a coward. ‘E would na face a man, bu’ back shot ‘im.

The ghost’s face was a study of fury and his voice raised in anger and frustration as he relived the story. Harry and Draco sat in silence at the horror of the scenes that the ghost had set for them.

Then he continued. “‘Er that, the crown took possession o’ me lands.” The ghost took a deep breath and shook his head at the thought. “There was a lassie, a wee bonnie thing she was, that was wed to Deryk. ‘ey ha’ only been wed for 2 turns, bu’ she foun’ ‘erself wi’ a

bairn o' 'er own. I watched 'or 'er and the wee bairn fer meny a year. Bu' th' more I watched th' more angered I become.

"He wer' a drivelly wee thing wi' no father to teach 'im th' clan ways. 'O course the MacDougal lads tried to teach 'im, bu' he was stubborn as a stone an' make no mistake about 'at.

"Weeel, when 'e came 'o age, 'e managed ta secure the deed 'o the cahsle to 'im self. No' th' lands min' ye, only the cahsle. Soo 'e moved it stone by stone to this God Almighty forsaken land an' ha' it rebuilt. Since I di' no' leave when I died, an I was tied to the cahsle, I wen' wit' eet."

The ghost laughed, "I made 'im pay though. Haunted it so baadly that non' cou' come ta visit.

"Ye laddies ar' th' firs' sourcers ta set foot in th' cahsle since. An welcoom ta ye. Ye seem ta be fine young laddies."

At that point another ghost came drifting in, "Ahh an there ye be Tavish, I've been lookin' fer...oh..." She noticed Draco and Harry and looked from them to the other ghost. "An 'oo be these fine lookin' laddies Tavish?"

Both Harry and Draco stood and Tavish held a ghostly hand out to Draco, "Tis Draco Lucius Malfoy I and Harold James Potter."

Harry started to correct the ghost but at the pressure on his arm and a shake of his head, Harry thought better of it.

Draco stepped forward and bowed graciously to the woman, "It is a pleasure to make your acquaintance milady."

Harry followed his lead and bowed as well. "You may call me Harry, milady."

The ghost then introduced his wife, "an thi' wee bonnie lassie is Rebekah Laigohair Frazer-MacDougal, me own goo' wife."

"Goodness me Tavish, these ar' English laddies, air ye sure 'tis safe?"

“Aye lassie, aye. They be good lads. “ey ‘ave asked permission to move into the cahsle. What say ye on the matter?”

She folded her hands in front of her and looked at the two of them and smiled. “Oh aye Tavish, ‘twill be good ta have company in the cahsle again. Noo, do ye laddies have lassies ‘o yer own ta care fer ye?”

Draco smiled. “Aye, my own good wife is called by Moira.”

The ghost smiled “Ah an eets a good solid name. An’ you Harry? Do ye have someone to wife?”

“I’m not married, yet, but I am seeing someone.”

The ghost looked confused. “What is seeing someone?”

Draco stepped in. “Courting, Harry is courting a young lady by the name of Ginevra Weasley.”

Harry looked at the two ghosts. “I also have a young son.”

The woman looked shocked. “An’ ye not married? He’ll be a bastard then.”

Harry laughed. “No, definitely not. I have adopted him and made him my own. His parents died and he needed someone to take care of him. He is a four-year-old Muggle boy...”

Both of the ghosts reacted. “Muggle ye say?”

Draco and Harry watched the two ghosts exchange looks with each other with marked concern on their ghostly faces.

“An’ how will ye explain us laddie?”

“I’ll tell him the truth like I always do. That there are two ghosts living with us in the castle and that they mean us no harm and can be quite good friends.”

Tavish laughed. “Ye’ve a bit o’ th’ yarn in ye and make no mistake aboot tha’.

Becky MacDougal glided a bit closer to Harry and looked at him with concern, "Eef ye don' min' my sayin' soo, young Harrly, ye look as eef you 'ave ha' a battle or two wit' th' Dragoon's yer self. How did ye com' by 'at scar? An unusual one i'tis.

Harry smiled and his hand automatically went to the lightning bolt scar on his forehead. Taking his lead from Tavish he laughed. "Noo 'at be a tale for another nig't. 'Tis a grand story an' one worth the tellin' make noo mistake aboot 'at."

Tavish narrowed his eyes trying to decide if Harry was making fun of him or just teasing. He decided, then he laughed for all he was worth. "Aye lad, aye. "Twill be saved for another nig't 'en.

Chapter 10.5 (Brogue translation from chapter 10)

“Really, is that any way to treat guests sir?”

“You are no guests of mine. You’re not welcome here. Go now while you still can.”

Then the ghost noticed that both of them had wands, and his demeanor changed. “You’re wizards then?”

“Yes we are both wizards.”

“Aye, I can see that. Who are you and what do you want?”

Draco bowed with respect and motioned Harry to do the same. “My name is Draco Lucius Malfoy I, late of Great Brittan and heir to Malfoy Manor. My companion is Harry James Potter, late of Surry and heir to the Potter fortune.

“With deepest respect, we request an audience with the Laird of the castle; would that be you sir?”

“Aye, it is me, but why would I wan’ to waste time talking to a couple of Dragoons.”

“We are not Dragoons milord.”

“Maybe, maybe no’ but ye are still English and don’t deserve my trust.”

“I understand your hesitation milord. Trust is to be earned not given away. One who does is a fool; and you sir, I can tell, are no fool.

“Ye’ve golden harp strings for a tongue, but be that as it may...” The ghost turned to float away but Draco called him back. He bowed again. “With your permission sir, my friend Harry and I would like very much to look through your castle.”

“Well now, would you? And what if you are spies for the crown?”

“Well sir, you should know that it is well over 250 years since King George II and his Dragoons occupied Scottish lands. Things have

changed a bit. Scotland, while part of the United Kingdom is a separate entity from Great Britain. And we have a Queen. Elizabeth by name, but if truth be told the monarchy ceased to rule many years ago in favor of Parliament. The Queen, forgive my saying so, is a ceremonial figurehead, though she is still treated with all deference due Royalty.

"Well now, that is worth the hearing'. 250 years ye say? You know that ghosts don't use time."

"I suppose that I should have known that, but I didn't." Harry mused.

The ghost seemed to consider them for a long moment, then made a decision, "Well I suppose that I could give you a look around the castle." He gestured that they should follow. "It's not a large castle on any account, but it served its purpose."

One by one the ghost drifted through different rooms, puffing up his chest in pride at the exclamations from Harry and Draco. The castle consisted of three wings all in amazingly good repair considering its age. Everywhere there were tapestries, old and faded, some in a state of fray that was beyond repair, but some proved not to be in too bad shape.

After about an hour and a half, the ghost brought them back to the great hall; having expounded greatly, the stories of the history of the castle, the lads that occupied it and the great and glorious battles that scared certain places.

Harry looked curiously at the specter in front of him. "Sir, you have been gracious to us today, but may I ask you one more thing?"

"Aye laddie, what is it?"

"Sir, may I ask your name?"

"Me name? Oh, aye laddie. 'Tis a grand an' glorious name it be, Laird Tavish Ewan Raibeart MacDougal." The ghost bowed to them. Then he smiled. "There is one more room 'at ye should see. Come with me."

The two of them followed along in the wake of the ghost. He led them into a large room at the top of the double stairs that had a door hidden by a large tapestry. It was a library. The shelves now stood empty, but it was obvious that at one time, books were in abundance. This was the only room that had any furniture in it at all.

Harry ran a reverent hand over the large desk, obviously newer than the house indicated. A large fireplace with an ornate mantle piece was the focal point of the room. It was green veined marble with a large mirror dustily reflecting the room.

Seeing the looks of delight on the two young men's faces, the Laird of MacDougal Castle took great pleasure in telling them of the stories of conquest of a gentler nature that happened within the four walls of this very room.

"O course, 'at was before I were wed, ye understand laddies."

Harry and Draco were finding it hard not to laugh at the stories of pursuit involving the young Laird and any servant girl that happened to catch his eye. They had transfigured odd pieces of debris into comfortable chairs while listening to their host and were now ensconced comfortably spending companionable time with an 18th century Scottish Laird.

After a pleasant hour of listening to the stories, Harry decided that they had built up a pleasant camaraderie with the old resident of MacDougal Castle and thought that it would be a good time to ask the question he was burning to ask. "Milord, my friend and I have a request to make of you. We would very much like to live here, if you permit it of course, and to move our families in as well. Would you be willing to allow that?"

"Allow' English to move in here? Well that is an unusual request, don't you think?"

"Oh, not really. Think about it, how long has it been since you've had people to talk to; to tell your stories too? How long has it been since you've had stories told to you?"

"Ye make a good point laddie, but you are English."

“Well, if you can get past that little flaw in our personalities, it might be an interesting prospect, don’t you think?”

The ghost laughed. “I would swear you have a bit of the Irish in you as well. You are full of the blarney.”

Harry looked a little disappointed. “Well, think about it if you would please.”

Draco asked another question that he was curious about. “I have a question for you milord. Am I correct in thinking that you are indeed a wizard?”

“Aye laddie, ‘at I am.”

“Well, from listening to your tales, it doesn’t sound like you used magic very much, if at all. Is that right?”

“You are very perceptive for a young lad; an’ ye would be right about ‘at. It was very dangerous to perform magic. Not every one in the castle was of the wizard persuasion. Witch’s and wizard’s ware burnt at the town square. Or so they thought. The ones they burnt weren’t magical at all. They were muggles that happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

“It was a very bad business. Well, it wouldn’t do to have the Lord suspected of such a thing. So, those of us that were blessed with magic, decided too not use it. That saved us a lot of problems.”

Both men nodded in understanding. Harry wondered how he would have felt, knowing that he a power available to him to help in certain situations and have his hands tied to do anything about it. He thought about his conversation with Ginny and the prospect of doing just that. He just shook his head. “That must have been frustrating for you.”

The ghost shrugged his shoulders. “Aye, it was at firs’, but then you can get used to anything after a time.”

“I suppose you’re right”

Then Draco looked at the specter. "How did the castle come to be here?"

The ghost puffed out his chest and rose into the air and looked angrier than Harry and Draco had seen him. He yelled "it was my own grandson; cowardly whoreson that he was, that tore me ancestral home down stone by stone and brought it to this place. It is a strange place you know; full of strange folk."

Harry smiled but Draco looked thoughtful then looked up. "Milord, when did your grandson bring the castle here?"

The ghost floated sedately back down to eye level and gave Draco and Harry a measuring scrutiny, as if judging if they were worthy to hear the story.

"Well, being English laddies, I'm not sure if I should tell ye the story, even though it is a story worth the hearing.

Draco smiled at the mistrust of the ghost. "Aye, we are English, but not like George's Dragoons. In fact Harry and I went to school in Scotland. Perhaps you've heard of Hogwarts?"

"Aye, that I have laddie, 'at I have. Well then, I will tell ye, but 'tis a long story mind ye, and a gruesome one at that; if ye have the stomach for it."

The two men leaned back in their chairs and settled in for a story in the old Scottish tradition; which meant a long drawn out yarn, expounding the bravery of the Scots, the cowardice of the English and always with the hero in grave peril.

"It was back in '43 when King George's Dragoons were plaguing the Scottish countryside. Bonnie Prince Charlie had left to exile in France, I was Laird of the MacDougal Clan, but ye know that already. Me lads had been up to a bit o' skullduggery, and make no mistake. 'They...borrowed...a few kine from the Grant lads, and why not, they had more then their share, didn't they?"

Harry looked at Draco, "kine?"

Draco whispered, "They stole a herd of cattle."

The ghost heard him, "Oh aye, if ye wan' to be...well, that's what the English said. You see, there happened to be a patrol from the English garrison out roaming the MacDougal lands. They came across my lads knowing them to be MacDougal's by their plaid and knowing the mark on the kine to be Grant. Well, they had no business meddling in Clan affairs did they?

"Me lads turned to give battle to the dratted red's. In the scuffle, one of my youngest lads, almost a boy, killed a regular. They made good their escape an' made straight to Castle MacDougal with the Dragoons giving chase for all they were worth.

"The castles gave a good fight, and make no mistake about that. Well, it's never good when you battle with Dragoons. Sooner or later they make you pay. Now I would never have given them wee Deryk. Nineteen he was with just a wee bit of fuzz about his face; but he be a MacDougal through and through. Very proud I was of him. He walked out of the castle under a white flag and gave himself to the soldiers.

"They built a pillory right there in the castle grounds. The captain took him prisoner and looked at my lads and me in the yard and said, "This man is guilty of murder of a King's man. Therefore, he will be beaten upon yon pillory upon the back with 100 stripes of the cat.

"Do ye know that when a cat hits your back, ye can hear the skin break apart? Well I don't mind telling you lads that I was a strong man and could stand quite a lot of torture myself. But to watch my son..." The ghost shook his head sadly and appeared to have great silvery tears fall on his great coat, "...let's just say that my strength had' a breaking point.

"After about 20 stripes, it was all I could stand. Now me and my lads had been disarmed and forced to watch, as a lesson to further lawbreakers. What they didn't know was that I still had my sgan dubh (pronounced skein due. It is a boot knife.) in me sock. In one move, I took the sgan dubh and threw it at the captain. It hit him in the chest and he fell straight like to the ground.

“Then a battle broke out. My lads didn’t have much of a chance though. We were mostly unarmed. I caught a musket ball straight through the heart...” The ghost pulled open his shirt to reveal a gaping hole right where his heart would have been.

Both Harry and Draco grimaced,

“...an’ died right there. Now my son was still chained to the pillory and my lads spent their blood to keep him living for he was now Lord.

“One of the Dragoons saw his chance and took a musket and shot my son in the back. He was a coward. He wouldn’t face a man, but back shot him.

The ghost’s face was a study of fury and his voice rose in anger and frustration as he relived the story. Harry and Draco sat in silence at the horror of the scenes that the ghost had set for them.

Then he continued. “After that, the crown took possession of my lands.” The ghost took a deep breath and shook his head at the thought. “There was a lassie, a wee bonnie thing she was, that was wed to Deryk. They had only been wed for two turns, but she found out that she was pregnant. I watched over her and the wee bairn for many years. But the more I watched the more angered I become.

“He was’ a drivelly wee thing with no father to teach him the clan ways. Of course the MacDougal lads tried to teach him, but he was stubborn as a stone and make no mistake about that.

“Well, when he came of age, he managed to secure the deed to the castle to himself. Not the lands mind you, only the castle. So he moved it stone by stone to this God Almighty forsaken land and had it rebuilt. Since I did not leave when I died, an I was tied to the castle, I went with it.”

The ghost laughed, “I made him pay though. Haunted it so badly that none could come to visit.

“You boys are the first sorcerers to set foot in the castle since, and welcome to you. You seem to be fine young men.”

At that point another ghost came drifting in, "Ahh an there you are Tavish, I've been looking for...oh..." She noticed Draco and Harry and looked from them to the other ghost. "And who be these fine looking laddies Tavish?"

Both Harry and Draco stood and Tavish held a ghostly hand out to Draco, "Tis Draco Lucius Malfoy I and Harold James Potter."

Harry started to correct the ghost but at the pressure on his arm and a shake of his head, Harry thought better of it.

Draco stepped forward and bowed graciously to the woman, "It is a pleasure to make your acquaintance milady."

Harry followed his lead and bowed as well. "You may call me Harry, milady."

The ghost then introduced his wife, "an thi' wee bonnie lassie is Rebekah Laigohair Frazer-MacDougal, me own good wife."

"Goodness me Tavish, these ar' English laddies, air ye sure 'tis safe?"

"Aye lassie, aye, they are good lads. "they 'have asked permission to move into the castle. What say ye on the matter?"

She folded her hands in front of her and looked at the two of them and smiled. "Oh aye Tavish, 'twill be good to have company in the castle again. Now, do ye laddies have lassies of your own to care for you?"

Draco smiled. "Aye, my own good wife is called by Moira."

The ghost smiled "Ah an it's a good solid name. And you Harry? Do you have someone to wife?"

"I'm not married, yet, but I am seeing someone."

The ghost looked confused. "What is seeing someone?"

Draco stepped in. "Courting, Harry is courting a young lady by the name of Ginevra Weasley."

Harry looked at the two ghosts. "I also have a young son."

The woman looked shocked. "And ye not married? He'll be a bastard then."

Harry laughed. "No, definitely not! I have adopted him and made him my own. His parents died and he needed someone to take care of him. He is a four-year-old muggle boy..."

Both of the ghosts reacted. "Muggle ye say?"

Draco and Harry watched the two ghosts exchange looks with each other with marked concern on their ghostly faces.

"An' how will ye explain us laddie?"

"I'll tell him the truth like I always do. That there are two ghosts living with us in the castle and that they mean us no harm and can be quite good friends."

Tavish laughed. "You've a bit of the yarn in ye and make no mistake about that."

Becky MacDougal glided a bit closer to Harry and looked at him with concern, "If you don't mind my saying so, young Harry, you look as if you have had a battle or two with the Dragoons yourself. How did ye come by that scar? An unusual one it is."

Harry smiled and his hand automatically went to the lightning bolt scar on his forehead. Taking his lead from Tavish he laughed. "Now that is a tale for another night. It is a grand story and one worth the telling make no mistake about that."

Tavish narrowed his eyes trying to decide if Harry was making fun of him or just teasing. He decided, then he laughed for all he was worth. "Aye lad, aye. "It will be saved for another night then."

Chapter 11 - Custody

Two days later found Harry and Draco getting ready to go to the custody hearing. Harry was a nervous wreck and glanced at his watch, paced the room back and forth, looked at his watch again and sighed, "Where the bloody hell is she? We are going to be late!"

Draco looked up from his magazine, shook his head then went back to reading without saying a word.

Then, for lack of a better target, Harry rounded on Draco, "How can you sit there and...", but his tirade was cut short when Draco, with the flick of a wand, put a silencing charm on him, and calmly went back to reading.

Harry abruptly got his attention by walking over and giving him a good swift kick in the shins.

"OW! Potter! That hurt!"

Draco looked angrily at his flatmate as he rubbed his leg. He saw Harry's mouth form the word, "Good!"

There was a sudden 'pop' in the room and the two looked around to see Ginny standing there. "I am so sorry I'm late, I had trouble getting away from the Ministry this morning." She looked at Harry sheepishly but he scowled at her and started a silent tirade, this time directed at her.

She glanced at Draco and smirked. "That bad, huh?"

"You have no idea! We better go." They both grabbed one of Harry's arms and pulled him out the door. "She kissed his cheek when they got in the car. "Harry, I know you are nervous but..."

Harry started to say something, then rolled his eyes and looked at Draco pointedly.

"Oh, all right. But you have to promise me that you will stop complaining."

At Harry's nod, Draco waved his wand. "Finite".

"You ever do that to me again, Malfoy, I'll hex you into next week!"

Ginny reached over and patted his hand as they sped down the drive and out onto the street. "Harry, they aren't going to start the hearing without you, relax."

"Maybe, but what kind of impression does that make. I can hear it now, 'What kind of father would you make, Mr. Potter? You can't even make it on time to the custody hearing!'"

Draco waved his wand threateningly. "I'm warning you, Potter, I'll do it again!"

Harry glared at him, threw himself back against the car seat, folded his arms and stewed.

"You *do* know that you are a bigger kid than Miki don't you?" Draco teased.

"Oh, cut him some slack, Draco, he's nervous. It's not every day that you become a father."

Draco sighed in exaggeration. "You do realize what you are asking of me don't you, Ginny? I mean, Potter-baiting has been my main source of entertainment since I was eleven years old. How can you ask me to just give all that up?"

Ginny only rolled her eyes. "Not for good, Draco, just until this is over." She giggled then turned back to Harry. "I *am* sorry that I was late Harry. They threw me a farewell party at the Ministry and I had a terrible time getting away."

He reached over and took her hand. "It's OK, Gin. It's like you said, I'm just nervous. I've never been wholly responsible for another human being before. I can't help but wonder if I'm doing the right thing. I mean, what kind of life can I give Mikeal? I'm a wizard, he's a Muggle. That right there can be a major source of problems. And..."

Ginny leaned over and kissed him. "The question is, Harry, do you love Miki enough to deal with problems that come up?"

"Well, yeah I do but..."

"No buts! Do you think that natural parents never deal with problems? C'mon, Harry, you of all people know the worst of problems."

"Ah, but how many parents have a crazed maniac out to kill them and their child? I'm putting Miki in danger. I mean, look at the git's father..." He indicated Draco who turned and scowled at him.

"I'll have you know, that I am not a git! And further more, Potter..." But he didn't continue when Ginny stared him down. So he settled for rolling his eyes and shutting his mouth.

"Ginny, we both know that Lucius is not going to remain in Azkaban. That's a given. Mikeal is only five years old and..."

"And..." Ginny continued for him, "he has the most wonderful and loving father that a boy could possibly have."

Draco sighed. "Look, Potter, the sale of the castle is going to be finalized in just a couple days. You can ward it to your heart's content. I would venture a guess that Tavish would be willing to help you."

Ginny looked confused. "Who is Tavish?"

Harry brightened. "Sorry, Gin. Since you were gone longer than expected, I haven't had the chance to tell you about all of this."

Draco laughed. "Tavish is only the castle's resident ghost"

"Ghost?"

"Yes, very Scottish, so he has a temper when riled. I would venture a guess that if my father would get past any wards we put up, that Tavish would make quick work of him. Then there's Rebekah."

Ginny rolled her eyes. "And who is Rebekah?"

Harry smiled and squeezed her hand. "Tavish's wife, of course!"

Ginny smirked. "Oh, of course!"

Draco laughed. "Yeah, she would probably mother him to death. Believe me when I say that, that would kill him."

They all laughed and Harry felt considerably lighter of heart when Draco steered the car into the court building parking lot.

When they got out of the car, Harry was attacked from behind. With an "ooof" he turned around to find Mikeal hugging his legs. "DADDY!"

Harry scooped him up and gave him a big hug and a kiss, then swept him up onto his shoulders. He looked up into the smiling face of Mrs. Lee and gave her a quick kiss on the cheek.

"Hello, Harry, ready for your big day?"

"As ready as I'll ever be."

She smiled and patted his cheek. "Don't be nervous, Harry, it's in the bag." Then she turned to Draco, "It's good to see you again, Mr. Malfoy."

"Please, Mrs. Lee, call me Draco. Mr. Malfoy is my father. That is an association that I really don't want to make. Is Moira with you?"

"She went inside already." She turned to Ginny, "And who is this lovely young lady?"

"Oh, I'm sorry. Mrs. Lee, this is Ginny Weasley...my girlfriend."

Ginny smiled at Harry, then stuck a hand out to the matron. "I am so pleased to meet you Mrs. Lee. Harry has told me so much about you."

"Well, I look forward to getting to know you better, young lady. In the mean time, I think that we should all go in. It's getting late. Harry, is your lawyer here?"

"He said he would meet me here. I'm sure he'll be here soon."

True to his word, a black Mercedes Benz rolled into the parking lot and Vince and Peggy got out and hurried over to the little group. "Sorry we're late, Harry..." He glanced at Mrs. Lee momentarily, "...ahh...traffic, you know."

Once Harry finished the introductions, Mikeal leaned over and whispered in Harry's ear, "Daddy, I haffa go bafroom."

"OK, mate. You lot go on in, I'm going to take Miki to the loo."

Five minutes later, Harry walked into the small judges chambers and sat with the small group of people.

Harry looked at the judge as she riffled through all the papers that Vince had given her. She seemed to be a little hard looking, no nonsense type woman of about fifty years, and he began to feel a little nervous. But when the woman looked up, she smiled at Mikeal.

"Now, young man, why don't you come over here and talk to me for a minute."

Mikeal looked at Harry doubtfully, but at his hero's nod, sidled forward hesitantly. He stood in front of the strange woman and put a finger in his mouth. It was all Harry could do to keep from coming forward and scooping him up and comforting him.

"OK, Mikeal, how would you like to sit on my lap and tell me all about yourself?"

Mikeal looked back at Harry and at his answering nod inched his way forward.

The judge lifted him up and put him on her lap. "Mikeal, I have a big room full of toys just next door. Would you like to come and see?"

"Can daddy come too?"

"Well, I would like to play with you first, and then daddy can come in and play with us. Will that be all right?"

Mikeal looked at the door, then back at Harry, then at the judge. "Can I keep the door open?"

"Of course you can. Come on, I bet I have some toys that you would like to play with." She set him down and held out a hand to him and he reluctantly took it and allowed her to lead him into the side room.

They were in the room for an hour. Harry paced. The others talked quietly. Harry paced some more. Every now and then he glanced toward the door then resumed pacing. He looked at Vince. "Is this good or bad Vince? What is taking so long?"

"Relax, Harry; she just wants to be thorough."

"Well, she's killing me."

As if on queue, Mikeal came running out of the room and made directly to Harry. "Daddy, the lady wants you to come and play with us. She's really nice, daddy." He pulled on Harry's hand and the two of them entered the judges' inner chambers.

"Come in, Mr. Potter. Close the door if you would please." She studied Harry as he sat in a chair and gathered Mikeal onto his lap. "Now, Mr. Potter, Mikeal has told me that he loves you and wants you to be his father. He says that you are buying a house for him."

Harry looked at Mikeal, and smiled at him. "We are scheduled to close on it in a few days."

Your lawyer states that you are independently wealthy. What made you take a position at the residence home?"

Harry chuckled. "Boredom, pure unadulterated boredom. When I came here, I had just gotten a divorce. I was angry, hurt, confused and a whole host of other feelings that were jumbled together. I laid around on the beach, trying to work everything out. Then, I ran into an old friend, in fact he was my partner when I was with the Ministry. The two of us proceeded to paint the town red; but that didn't last long. I'm not used to having nothing to do."

He remembered Draco's taunting him when he was moping around, and chuckled. "So I took up the classified ads and looked for work. I talked to Mrs. Lee and met Mikeal during my job interview. He had been..." he looked at his son and hugged him, "...not behaving very nicely." Then Harry laughed, "...in fact the first thing he did was kick me. We get on a bit better now, don't we, mate?"

Mikeal nodded his head and put his fingers in his mouth and his head on Harry's shoulder. "Daddy, can we go home now?"

"Not just yet, kiddo, hang in there. Are you tired?" Mikeal nodded his head and Harry hugged him and took his fingers out of his mouth. "Well, put your head down on my shoulder and go to sleep if you want to." He looked at the judge. "He usually takes a nap about now."

"Well, Mr. Potter, we don't need to prolong this. I've already made my decision." She stood and stuck a hand out to Harry. "Congratulations, Mr. Potter, I am granting full and unconditional custody. You do understand that we will need to set a date for the actual adoption?"

"Yes, I understand that, your honor."

"Good, we can go out to the outer chamber and make it official. I can do that with your lawyer. You should get your son home for a nice long nap." Then she smiled again. "In my line of work, I see so many families broken by divorce, anger and a whole host of other unpleasant things. I love to see the beginning of a new family. I'm glad that I was able to be part of this."

Harry's voice felt strangely choked. He swallowed against the lump that had formed there and smiled. "It's pretty brilliant being on this end too."

Chapter 12 – Moving in

Harry carried Mikeal out and smiled at his assembled friends. He listened intently to the judge talking to Vince. After all the legal obligations were dispensed with, he went to where Peggy was standing. “Why don’t you two come to the flat, now that this is done? We are having a bit of a celebration.” At her nod, he turned to the lady that made this all possible. “Mrs. Lee, I would appreciate it if you would come as well.”

“Oh, Harry, I really must get back...”

“No, please, I need you to come because I have something for you. Please, say you will?”

“Well, all right, Harry. But I really can’t stay long.”

“Understood, Mrs. Lee.”

They all returned to the flat about a half-hour later. Harry laid Miki down in his bed, took his shoes off and covered him up and quietly closed the door.

“OK, now, Mrs. Lee, thank you for coming. Please, sit down.”

Harry sat on the coffee table in front of her. “Mrs. Lee,” he took her hands in his. “I have seen you struggling month after month to make sure that the children have enough to eat, clothes to wear and the basic necessities in order to have as normal a life as possible.” Harry squeezed her hands and smiled. “The children have all they need thanks to your thriftiness. He looked up as Vince and Peggy came in. “Hey Vince, I need you here. please.”

When Vince was seated next to Mrs. Lee, Harry began again. “Mrs. Lee, I don’t want you to worry any longer about money. I want you to do what you do best, that is take care of the kids. So, I am taking over the payment of all operating costs of the home. Rent, Utilities, clothing, food and wages. Vince will come to the home tomorrow morning and go over costs with you. He will see to it that you and the kids don’t have to struggle anymore.”

Mrs. Lee sat and looked at Harry with her mouth open. She just stared at him. "Ahh Harry, that is very generous, but..."

"No buts, Mrs. Lee, I want to do this for you. You have helped me get over a very difficult time in my life and in fact are largely responsible for making Miki my son. So tomorrow, Vince will go over the bills and see to it that the home's needs are completely met.

In return however, I would like you to take the money that the state gives you and make an account for each child. When the child comes of age, such as after graduation of High School, that money will be available for University or other things to be decided on an individual basis."

She stared at Harry in awe. "Harry, I don't know what to say."

"No need to say anything. This is my way of saying thank you. Oh, I am also still planning to work with the kids...if that's all right?"

"If that's..." She looked at Harry and rolled her eyes. "Yes, Harry, that's all right." She stood and shook hands with him and then pulled him into a huge hug. "Harry, you have become like my own. I have decided to give you a new name; ke moopuna kâne, it means grandson."

Harry smiled. "I'm honored, and how do you say grandmother?"

"Ke kupuna wahine."

Harry carefully repeated the Hawaiian phrase. "Ke kupuna wahine. Thank you, Ke kupuna wahine. You will never know what it means to me to be included in your family."

She patted his cheeks lovingly, then turned to Vince and took his hand in both of hers. "Thank you for your help, sir." By this time she had tears in her eyes. Then she turned back to Harry and kissed both cheeks. "I'll see you and Miki at the Home...tomorrow?"

"We'll be there." He walked her to the door. "Thank you, Ke kupuna wahine, for everything." She smiled at him, touched his cheek then left the flat.

Ginny looked at Harry with tears in her eyes. "That, was the single most endearing thing, I have ever seen."

Harry shrugged his shoulders. "I have more money than I can possibly use in a lifetime. It might as well go to a good cause; and I can't think of a better one."

Harry rubbed his hands together. "OK, we are celebrating. Ginny, there is a pitcher of drinks in the fridge. Can you get it out, please? Draco, can you get the wine glasses?"

Harry was so excited that he was practically glowing. After he had poured the drinks and passed them out he spoke. "I just want to thank all of you..." without turning around to Draco he smirked, "...not one word, Malfoy."

Draco rolled his eyes.

"I saw that! Anyway as I was saying, I want to thank you all for everything." He grinned. "This is the coolest thing."

Everyone in the room laughed at Harry's enthusiasm.

Harry held his cup up. "To new families."

"New Families." They all repeated.

Then there was gagging from behind Harry. He turned around and started pounding Draco on the back.

"What the hell is this stuff, Potter?"

"Kool-aid!"

"You're trying to poison me! Admit it."

Ginny started giggling. "You'll live, Malfoy. I don't think that Kool-aid has been deemed harmful."

"That's what you know, Weaslette. Gaaak. C'mon Moira, you and I are going to go where no one is trying to kill me."

Harry laughed. "Your options are severely limited then, Dray."

"Clever, Potter, you should go into comedy."

Harry only laughed.

"Harry, Peggy and I are going to go enjoy the island before we have to return to England. So, as pleasant as this is..."

"Go on, get out of here. Enjoy yourselves; and by the way, I appreciate your help with the Children's Home."

"My pleasure, Harry." They shook hands and Vince led Peggy out with a hand on the small of her back.

After everyone was gone, Harry turned back to Ginny and smiled. "It's really happening, Gin. I'm a dad!" Then he got a frightened look on his face that made Ginny laugh.

"What?"

He sat down with a soft *thwump* on the sofa. "Oh my gosh...I'm a dad!"

She dropped down next to him and pressed a kiss on his cheek. "I think, Harry, that just like Draco, you will live through it." She laughed when he groaned.

She sat next to him and cuddled into his side when he put an arm around her.

"Ginny, what are you planning? Are you planning to stay here, or get a place of your own or go back to England or...?"

"Harry, I told you; I want to try...us. I can't very well do that in England.

"Then, will you...can you...bollocks, I'm not saying this very well." Then he sighed. "Ginny, will you move into the castle with us." Then he hurried on unless she got the wrong idea of his intentions. "You can have your own room. There are plenty of them. I want to try 'us'

also; and you are right, we can't do that with you in England, and frankly I could use the help with Miki. I am absolutely positive that it is going to be different than working at the Home a few hours a day."

"There's a lot of work that we need to do to bring the castle up to standards that are livable; and there are the ghosts."

"What about the ghosts?"

"Rebekkah was asking about you."

"How would she know about me?"

"Oh, I told her all about you. She was very interested to know if Draco and I had someone to take care of us."

Ginny giggled. "And do you need someone to take care of you, Mr. Potter?"

"Absolutely! I don't think Moira wants the job. After all Miki and I are such a handful."

She laughed. "Well, from what I remember from when you stayed at the Burrow, I can understand her concerns."

"Hey! I was a wonderful house guest, I'll have you know. Your mother always loved it when I came."

"That was just because she had a thing for children. Lots and lots of children."

"Humph, you're very flattering," he grumped. "I do miss your mum and dad. How are they?"

"Same as always. Dad finally got a promotion at work. Let's see if I can get this right. He is Undersecretary to the Junior Minister of Muggle Relations."

Harry smiled. "Well, does he at least like the job?"

She shrugged. "Seems too, I guess. He really doesn't talk much about it."

“How’s the joke shop going?”

“Booming! Fred and George have three now and are spending their time Apparating between them. They complain all the time about how busy they are, but they love it and wouldn’t stop for anything.”

“That’s good. I kind of miss having them around though. They can bring a house down, those two.”

“Oh, I forgot to tell you. Bill and Charlie had a double wedding. Bill married Fleur and Charlie married Annabelle. He met her while working with his dragons. Fleur is Pregnant, just barely though and mum is haunting Charlie about how nice it would be to have another baby on the way as well. Poor Charlie. Percy isn’t working for the Ministry any more. He got fed up with all the politics and is now working for Fred and George as a financial advisor. They hate it, but admit that things have definitely gotten better since Percy took over. However they said that if I ever told anyone that they said that, that they would hex me into next year, then deny that they had anything to do with it.” She laughed, “I guess I’m in trouble, because I told you.”

“I think you’ll live, Gin.” He laughed.

By silent mutual consent, they stopped the conversation about the Weasley family status right there and Harry was grateful. He had no desire to talk about how Ron was and preferred to think of him as dead. He knew that it was childish, but frankly, didn’t care.

Ginny turned to face Harry on the sofa, excitement showing in her eyes. “So, tell me about your castle.”

An hour and a half later Ginny was still as excited as when he started. In two days, she and Harry, along with Draco and Moira, were going to go to the castle and make remodeling plans. The only thing that Harry could tell her for sure was that the Great Hall was going to be divided into two parts to go along with the two of the wings of the castle. Draco and Moira could decorate and change their half any way they wanted to; and by mutual consent, the Library was going to be left alone with the exception of a thorough cleaning and stocking of books on the shelves.

There were thirty available rooms in the castle, so Harry took one wing and Draco and Moira took the other and picked out which rooms were going to be remodeled first. The third wing would be worked on as time permitted.

A week later, saw them up to their ears in debris, dirt and decades of disuse. Two weeks later, saw the small group, remodeling the kitchen to bring it up to a workable unit. Three weeks saw all woodwork taken down, stained and replaced. Tavish was a great help. He could float up to the rafters and tell if the piece needed to be completely redone or not.

Harry had gotten permission from Mrs. Lee to let Mikeal stay at the home during the remodeling work. He didn't want to take the chance of him getting lost somewhere in the castle and also thought that he would really rather play with his friends anyway.

At four weeks, Harry and Ginny finally got the chance to go shopping and buy furniture for their wing of the castle. Harry bought himself a king-size four-poster canopy bed made of thick heavy dark wood with dressers and side tables and wardrobe to match; all with brass fittings. He even found heavy wrought iron sconces to hold candles on the wall. Mostly for decoration he explained to Ginny. He put a thick plush cream carpet on the floor to counter all the dark fittings and finally French doors that opened out onto a large balcony that looked out toward the ocean. This balcony was the reason he picked this particular room.

Ginny, picked the room just next to his. She too got a king-sized bed, but in brass. The carpet was grass green and the accompanying furniture was white. The room was light and airy. She also had French doors that opened out onto an equally large balcony, adjacent to Harry's. She bought white chiffon curtains to go over the doors so that when she opened the doors, the curtains would billow in the ocean breeze.

Miki's room was directly across the hall from theirs. They gave Miki the freedom to pick any bed that he wanted. He picked a bed that looked like a race car. So they decorated his room in a race car motif.

When the three rooms were finally finished, and the kitchen and bathrooms had been deemed operational, they moved in. It was exactly two months from the time that they took possession of the castle. It had taken several weeks to get the inspectors out to look at the place and to approve it.

Draco wanted to hex them into submission but Harry kept telling him it would be all right. The lady at the inspection counter in the county building took an instant disliking to Harry and as a result caused all sorts of delays. Eventually, Ginny, Draco and Moira, all had to keep him from hexing her into oblivion himself.

The last straw came when Ginny was at the office and handed in the umpteenth packet of paperwork to this woman. She saw her drop the packet into the trash. Unperturbed, Ginny jumped up on the counter, swung her legs around, walked over to the trash and picked the packet of papers out of the trash. She then walked into the office of the woman's boss, with her following right behind yelling, "you can't go in there. I'm calling security."

Ginny turned around and smiled sweetly, covertly took out her wand and hexed the seams on the woman's dress to suddenly come undone. The lady was suddenly standing there in her shift in a puddle of cotton fabric, so embarrassed that she could die, and ran out of the room.

Laughing, Ginny turned to the gentleman and handed him the packet. She explained what had been going on and he quickly approved the final inspection and called in an inspector and scheduled an appointment for that afternoon.

He then looked at Ginny. "What happened to, Consuela?"

"I'm not certain, Mr. Lo. I suppose that she had a loose thread get caught on a nail or something. Thank you very much sir for your attention to this matter."

"I can't imagine why Consuela would treat you that way. She is generally very affable."

Ginny shrugged her shoulders and started to walk out, but she was called back by Mr. Lo, "Are you really, remodeling MacDougal Castle? That place is said to be haunted. Are you sure you know what you are doing?"

"Haunted? Oh, pish-posh, Mr. Lo. Certainly you don't believe in ghosts."

"Certainly, I do, young lady. You be careful up there."

Ginny gave the man a puzzled look, then turned and left the building. By the time she got back, the final inspectors were there, hurrying as much as they could get away with so that they could leave the old building.

After they were gone, and Harry had the signed papers in hand, Ginny explained what had happened.

"You were the one holding me back, Gin," Harry grinned, "But, thank you, love. I couldn't have done this without you."

Once all the furniture arrived, Draco was pacing around in frustration. He leaned over to Harry. "We could shrink the stuff down, carry it up to the rooms and expand it again without marring my freshly painted walls, the prats."

"Muggles, remember. It would be too odd to have them leave all of this stuff out here with just the four of us to carry it all in. If they mess up your walls Draco, we'll just fix them when there are no Muggles around, OK?"

Draco leaned against the stone railing and folded his arms as he watched four large men go up the steps, walk across the stone porch and bang the wooded double doors with a piece of Harry's bed. His grimace was horrible. "I'll kill'em."

Ginny and Moira were on the inside, directing the movers where they should go. Both of them were just as frustrated as Draco was.

Moira came out. "You know, Harry, we could shrink this stuff down and carry it in ourselves. You should see Dray's paint job in there. I want to kill them."

Draco smirked. "Two against one Potter." He rubbed his hands together and had an evil gleam in his eyes. "I get to do the hexing."

"Don't you dare! We'll let them finish, then we'll fix it."

"Spoil Sport," both Draco and Moira intoned. Then they looked at each other and laughed.

Harry rolled his eyes. "Look, why don't you two go get a cup of coffee or something then go by and pick up Mikeal at school. By the time you get back, I'll have everything fixed up, OK?"

"You do know you are taking all the fun out of this, don't you?" Moira deadpanned.

Harry rolled his eyes again. "Just go."

He watched them jump into Draco's red Lamborghini and shook his head, then went back into the castle. He went up and put his arms around Ginny and kissed her shoulder. "How's it going in here?"

"I sent Moira out there with you two. She wanted to hex every worker that came through the door."

"I sent them off to get a cup of coffee then go pick up Miki. Draco was driving me nuts; I had to watch him every second."

Ginny turned to him with a twinkle in her eye. "You mean, we're alone?"

"Well, yeah, I guess we are; except for ten movers walking in and out."

"Come here, Mr. Potter." She took his hand and pulled him into the kitchen, straight into the pantry and closed the door. "I don't think the workers will come in here. Kiss me."

He smiled. "As my lady commands." He cupped her cheeks in his hands and pulled her closer as he wound his fingers through her veil of red hair. Each tongue fought for dominance. Finally, when the need for air, surmounted their need for each other, they reluctantly broke apart. "That was..."

"Heavenly!" Ginny finished for him and moved in again for another.

Harry snaked his arms around her waist and pulled her even closer against him. He could feel every inch of himself, pressed against every inch of her. Evidently it had the same effect on her as it did him because they were both red-faced. Ginny stammered. "Maybe we should go out there and direct traffic. There is no telling where they are putting everything."

"Yeah, maybe you're right, Gin. Wow." He shook his head and ran a hand through his hair. "Maybe we better do it now!"

When they returned to the foyer, the remainder of the furniture was stacked there and the truck was no where to be seen.

"Why those lazy, good-for-nothing..."

Harry caught her arm. "Now we can shrink everything down and do what Draco and Moira wanted to do in the first place."

She smiled. "I like the way you think, Potter."

"Shall we get to it, Weasley?"

"Definitely."

By the time that Draco and Moira came home with Mikeal, Harry and Ginny had all of the furniture distributed to the proper rooms and resized the way it was supposed to be. Harry even had his, Ginny's and Miki's rooms set up and ready to sleep in that night. He left Miki with Ginny and went to help Draco with his stuff.

That night they had a celebratory dinner and spent the first night in their new home. Before they relaxed though, the four of them placed wards in and around the castle.

After they finished, Draco rubbed his hands together. “Better than a burglar alarm.”

Chapter 13 – Name calling

Harry and Ginny sat in a chaise lounge that occupied a space on the balcony. The French doors that led to Harry's suite of rooms in the castle, stood open.

The silence between them was comfortable, born of years of friendship and months of re-acquaintance. Ginny shifted in the chair so that she could bury her face in the hollow of Harry's neck and place tiny kisses along it and run her hand lovingly through his hair and around his ear.

"Tease!" Harry chuckled. But he tightened his arm around her and lowered his lips to hers. "Are you glad you're here, Gin? I mean, really happy to be here?"

She smiled softly at him. "Of course, Harry, why do you ask that?"

"Well, you gave up a lot to move to Hawaii. I know that; and I also know how close you are to your family."

She snuggled closer and moved her head to his shoulder. "I do miss Mum and Dad; but it's not like we can't go visit any time we want, right?"

He shifted a bit so that he could look at her. "That's just it, Ginny, we can't just up and leave any time we want. Miki is going to school now. We can't just pull him out when ever we feel like it. There is also the time constraint to think of. Flying to England from Hawaii takes a lot of time. It's not like we can go for a weekend or something."

"We could if we Flooed there, or Apparated or used a Port Key."

She felt Harry stiffen beneath her. "No!"

"Why not, Harry?"

"Miki..."

"Miki should be told. He has the right to know just who you are; who we are." She sat up so that she could look in his eyes. "Harry, you

have to tell him eventually. Why not now? Things tend to happen around you whether you want them to or not. It will be easier to explain it now rather than after the fact when he is frightened to death.”

“I said no, Ginny!”

“But, why?”

“How do you explain to a five year old, about our world?”

“The same way you explain anything to a five year old, Harry; with love and patience.”

“It’s out of the question!”

“Stubborn prat!” She stood up and started to pace.

Harry could not contain his anger any longer. “I am his parent, Ginny, not you! I will decide what is best for MY son!”

Ginny stopped and looked at Harry in amazement; then it changed to anger. “You’re right Harry, he is *your* son. I’ll just get out of your way!” She stormed through the French Doors and out of his room.

Moments later, he heard her door slam; and moments after that she came out onto her balcony and pushed open the French doors with such force that the glass shattered. She looked across the expanse from the two balconies and glared at Harry. “You invited me to stay here. You asked for my help. You stupid arse!”

He glared at her. “Meddling wench!”

“Sodding bastard!”

“Bloody harppie!”

Harry’s eyes narrowed as Ginny pulled her wand out and pointed it at him. Then behind her he noticed a movement and his eyes widened as his son came out onto Ginny’s balcony.

Ginny followed his gaze and quickly put the wand away.

“Mum, why are you yelling?”

With a look of triumph she stared at Harry and scooped Miki up and hugged him, “Hello darling, mum and daddy are just having a little disagreement; it’s nothing to worry about. How was school today, son?” She gave Harry another smug look and re-entered her room.

Harry pounded a fist on the balustrade and looked out toward the ocean and let the warm breeze calm him.

After a long time, Harry found Ginny and Mikeal in the kitchen having biscuits and milk and looking over all the school papers that Miki had brought home that day. Miki looked up at Harry with a smile that brightened the room. “Mum says that you don’t feel good daddy. Are you OK? You wan’ some cookies?”

Harry looked at his son. “Mikeal, she isn’t...”

Ginny looked up at Harry with shock and hurt in her eyes and slowly stood up, never taking her eyes off of him.

Harry started again. “Miki...” He looked straight into Ginny’s eyes. “Mum is right. I’m not feeling very good right now. Why don’t you finish up your biscuits and go on up to your room to play. Daddy needs to talk to mum right now.”

The little boy nodded and stuffed the cookies in his mouth and grabbed a couple off the plate and stuck them in his pocket and ran up the steps to his room.

Harry looked at the floor for a while and Ginny stared at him.

With a sigh he looked up at her. “I’m sorry Gin. I had no right to...”

Ginny crossed the distance between them and put a finger over his lips. Her words came in a whisper. “Harry, I am NOT trying to take that little boy away from you. I just want to be included. If you really feel that I have no say in the matter, then I’ll back off.”

“That’s not what I want, Gin.”

“Then what do you want? You can’t have it both ways, Harry.”

“I want to protect that little chap with everything that is in me, Ginny. I don’t want him exposed to all the dangers I faced. I don’t want him anywhere near any of that. Do you understand?”

She smiled gently. “Of course I understand, Harry. Do you really think that I want anything less? But sweetheart, we are living in a castle with ghosts. Mikeal is bound to meet them. You have already been accosted by Lucius Malfoy; and though he may be in Azkaban right now, you know as well as I do that he isn’t going to stay there. We are living with Draco and Moira Malfoy, and let’s face it; Draco isn’t exactly the soul of discretion when it comes to using his magic. Harry, please, listen to reason. Miki needs to know.”

Harry paced in thought for a while, then looked sadly up at her. “I know you’re right Ginny; I do. But I just can’t, not now.”

With an exasperated sigh she marched over to the table and scooped up the glasses and plates off the table and put them in the sink, then just stood there with her back to Harry, gripping the counter so tightly that her knuckles turned white.

Harry came up behind her and snaked his arms around her waist.

She shrugged him off. “Don’t!”

Harry looked shocked. “OK. Why?”

“Because when you hold me, or when I look into your eyes, I lose all coherency. This is just too important to pass over due to my weakness for you. You are wrong, Harry; and somehow, I’ve got to make you see that. You are not being logical and it could end up hurting Miki.”

She turned around and looked at him. “I’m afraid, Harry. I am frightened to death that Lucius will return and do something to that little boy.” The tears were coming now as she looked at him and he wanted to go to her; to wipe the tears away but she held up a hand to ward him off. “No, Harry, listen to me! Lucius Malfoy will come back here some day; and it terrifies me.”

Harry's voice was quiet, but loud enough for her to hear him. "Yes, I know that; but how is Miki knowing, going to help protect him? When ever it happens, he won't be able to do anything about it.

"Magical objects work for muggles as well as witches and wizards. Invisibility cloaks, Port Keys and a host of other things can protect him better than nothing at all. But he has to know of their existence to be able to use them. And think about this, Harry, what if Lucius doesn't show up here for years? Mikeal will be older then. Perhaps out of the house without you. Teenagers tend to want to be with their friends more than their parents. What will happen to him if you are not around?"

Harry was quiet for a long time. Ginny walked up to him and put a comforting hand on his arm and squeezed. "Harry, at least think about it, all right?"

He nodded. "I'll think about it, Gin."

"Does it help you to know that I love you?"

"Why, Ginny? After all those things I said to you this afternoon, you should be packing your bags and leaving my sorry arse."

"Well, I said some pretty horrible things to you too. Why aren't you kicking me out?"

"Because, I don't want you to leave."

"And I don't want to leave either, so I guess we're stuck with each other."

"You know, we were having a pretty nice time before all this came about. Do you suppose we could pick up where we left off?"

She cupped his cheek in her hand and kissed him. "No, we have a son playing in his room and I have dinner to make. But we have a date tonight, after Miki is in bed, all right?"

“I don’t know, Gin. I don’t think I can wait that long. I may need something to tide me over.” Harry’s eyes were twinkling as he looked at her, and it made her insides turn to jelly.

He lowered his head and captured her lips, gently at first, then deepening to a breathless ‘want.’

Ginny wound her arms around his neck and moaned just a bit, then whispered against his lips, “Harry, you don’t play fair.”

He chuckled. “Thank you!” He waggled his eyebrows at her a couple of times and grinned.

“Daddy, mum?”

They both looked over at their son and smiled. “Come on in, Miki.”

The boy beamed and ran over to them. “Are you feelin’ better daddy?”

“Absolutely, mate!”

Chapter 14 - Bonyweeberin

It had been two weeks of heavy discussion on Harry and Ginny's part; whether to tell him or not; how to tell him; when to tell him if they decided to. They had been in the middle of a heated discussion when Miki came into Harry's bedroom.

"Daddy, can I axe you a question?"

"Of course Miki, what's the question?"

"What's bonyweeberin?"

Ginny and Harry just looked at each other, and Ginny picked him up. "A what, sweetheart?"

"A bonyweeberin, that's what Lady Rebekkah called me. What is it?"

Ginny put her hand to her mouth and started to giggle. She looked at Harry with a grin. "Well, this solves at least part of the problem."

Harry looked confused. "Mikeal, you...met...Lady Rebekkah?"

"Uh huh, she says she's a ghost. Is she a ghost, daddy? She isn't scary. She sings me songs."

Harry was speechless, so Ginny laughingly answered. "Yes, Miki, she is a ghost. Tell me, have you met Laird Tavish yet?"

"One time, but Lady Rebekkah chased him out with a cookin' thing. You know mum, like you make eggs in for brefest."

She laughed again; this time Harry grinned slightly. "Do you mean a skillet, Miki?"

"Uh huh."

Harry was starting to catch the humor of it all and tried very hard to keep from laughing himself. "Why did Rebekkah chase Tavish out of the room, Miki?"

“Cause he was tellin’ me stories, an’ she say’s that I was just a bonyweeberin.”

Harry lost it and bent over laughing. Once he calmed down he looked at his son. “Not bonyweeberin mate, bonnie wee bairn . It means that you are a good little boy.” Harry smiled at his son and caressed his cheek. “I love you, Mikeal.”

He looked up at Ginny. “It’s time, Gin. Let’s do this now.”

Her eyes widened. “As in now, now? As in right this minute?”

He took Mikeal from her arms and set him on his bed. “As in right this minute.”

She grinned. “All right then.”

Harry pulled the pillow out from the freshly made bed and propped his back against it and pulled Miki to his lap. “Come here, mate, Daddy and Mum have some things we need to talk about with you.”

Ginny sat at the other side of her two men and took Miki’s hand.

Harry looked at Ginny in an unspoken plea for support, then at Mikeal. “Miki, do you remember all the stories daddy told you about good wizard Harry?”

“Uh huh.”

“What if I told you that they were all true; that daddy can really fly on a broomstick, and use a wand and all of those other things that were in the stories? Would you believe me?”

Miki laughed. “Naw, daddy.”

“Why not?”

“Cause in your stories, Uncle Dray is a bad wizard.”

“I just knew that that would come back to bite you one day, Potter.”

The three of them looked up in the doorway and saw Draco leaning against it with a huge smile on his face. "And I'm glad that I was here to see it."

Harry laughed. "Yeah, well. Every story has to have a good guy and a bad guy. You just seemed the logical choice."

Draco came in and sat on the end of Harry's bed. "Don't you believe him kid. I am a very good wizard."

"You really are a wizard, Uncle Dray?"

"Yep. Have been all my life. Just like your daddy and mum and Aunt Moira."

Miki looked at the three of them then smiled. "Nuh huh, you're tellin me another story."

Harry squeezed his hand. "No, we are telling you the truth mate."

Miki sat in silence for a minute, then his eyes got wide. "DADDY! YOU CAN FLY? ON A BROOM?" Miki jumped up and his face was alight with excitement.

Harry nodded with a smile then looked at Ginny. "Sweetheart, the firebolt is in the closet over there. Can you get it please?"

Ginny opened the closet door and pulled out Harry's most valued possession, his Firebolt, and handed it to him. Harry, in turn, handed it to Miki to hold; who, without a moments notice, mounted it and jumped off the bed. Luckily it wasn't very high, so when he fell he only scraped his hands and knees on the carpet.

The three adults jumped up in shock at the speed which everything happened. Ginny helped Miki up and brushed off his knees. Harry was shaking his head and frowning, and Draco was laughing.

Miki looked up at Harry, his eyes shining with tears. "It dinnit fly, daddy! Is it broke?"

Harry shook his head. "No son, it's not broken. Come here, mate, we aren't finished talking yet." Harry gathered him up on his lap again and gave him a big hug before he began to explain. "Miki, you know that you are adopted right?"

Miki nodded, and Harry continued. "Well, your real mum and dad were what we call Muggles. That means that they didn't have any magic. They couldn't use wands or fly on brooms or any of the other stuff that good wizard Harry could do.

"On the other hand, daddy and Uncle Dray are wizards and mummy and Aunt Moira are witches."

Mikeal laughed. "Nuh huh, daddy, witches are ugly and green. My mum is pretty."

"Yes she is Miki, she's very pretty."

Ginny blushed; Draco groaned. "OK, enough of the mutual admiration society. Harry, show him. Get your wand out and show him."

"Huh, oh...well...OK." Harry reached into the bed side table and pulled his wand out, and handed it to Miki. "That's daddy's wand." Then Harry got a twinkle in his eye. "Do you want to fly mate?"

His eyes were alight with excitement. "Yeah, can I?"

Harry chuckled, Ginny frowned. "Harry, don't you dare!"

"Why, it's not going to hurt him." He pointed the wand at his son and said, "Wingardium Leviosa!"

Immediately, Mikeal floated off the bed and up about a foot. Mikeal's eyes got wide then he started to giggle. Harry lowered the wand and gently set his son back on the bed. "Well, what do you think mate?"

He looked at Harry in wide-eyed wonder and whispered. "I wanna fly on the broom, daddy."

Harry grinned and looked at Ginny.

She was frowning. "No way, Harry!"

"Ginny, you sound like someone who I refuse to mention in this house."

"Don't you dare compare me to her; and don't you dare take him flying. Draco, say something to him."

Draco smiled at her sympathetically, turned to Harry and said, "Something."

"Draco!" She looked at the two men, then at Mikeal, huffed, and stormed out of the room.

Harry looked at his friend. "I'm in big trouble."

Draco picked up the broom. "Well then, perhaps you should do something to be in trouble for." He handed the broom to Harry with a conspiratorial grin.

"It's still too light outside, Dray. Maybe we should wait."

"If you wait, Ginny will have her say." Then he smiled. "Disillusionment?"

Harry smiled. "Perfect! You coming with us?"

"Not this time, I'm going to go keep Ginny at bay. Have fun you two."

"Thanks, Dray. Hey, was there something you needed? You must have come up here for a reason."

"Oh, yeah. Millson sent you an owl. Nothing important though. It's some sort of dinner or something."

Harry nodded then he looked at his son. "C'mere Miki." Harry rapped his son on the head with his wand and watched as he slowly turned blended into the background; then he did the same for himself. "Now Miki, it is very important that you listen and do exactly as I say. Sit here in front of me and hold on to the handle with both hands."

Miki did exactly as Harry told him. Harry could feel him snuggle up tight against him. With a wave of his wand the French doors opened and Harry 'commanded' the broom to rise. "OK, mate, here we go."

Harry guided the broom out into the setting sun and held tight to his son. He took it slowly as he flew around the castle and hovered for a moment at the kitchen window where Ginny was peeling vegetables and mumbling to herself. He chuckled. "Miki, I hope you appreciate this. Mum is very upset with daddy. You have to be sure to be on your best behavior."

"All right, daddy."

They took off again and flew slowly around the grounds for a while longer and Mikeal was speechless. Harry landed on the ground and took the Disillusionment Charm off of the two of them, then walked over with Miki and sat under a tree.

"So, what do you think, mate?"

Miki's eyes were dancing with excitement and he hugged Harry. "Oh, daddy, that was – so fun."

"Yes, it was Miki. Now there are some things that you need to know. First, never try to do this by yourself. Remember how you fell off the bed?"

Miki nodded.

"That's because you can't do this. You don't have the magic. However, all you have to do is ask, and if I can, I will take you for a ride. The answer won't always be yes, but I will when I can, all right?"

Again Miki nodded.

"Now there is one more thing that is very important. You are not to tell your friends at school or anywhere. They don't know about wizards. They don't think that wizards exist. They think they are made up. So, you can't tell anyone, ever. Do you understand?"

He looked very seriously at Harry. "Yes, daddy."

“All right then.” Harry leaned back against the tree and sighed. “This is nice, Miki.”

“Uh huh.” Then he sighed as well.

They sat under the tree for a while; father and son; the younger mimicking the older. If Harry crossed his legs, Mikeal crossed his legs; if Harry sighed and leaned his head back against the tree; Mikeal sighed and leaned his head back against the tree. They sat there for about a half-hour before Harry stood up. “Come on buddy, mum probably has dinner ready and she’ll skin us alive if we’re late.”

He replaced the Disillusionment Charm, climbed on the broom and flew back to the castle and through the French doors of his room.

The two boys went down to the kitchen and entered a little sheepishly. Harry looked at Draco who shook his head. Moira rolled her eyes at him. Harry sighed. “Come on, mate.”

Harry lifted Miki high into the air and placed him in his chair at the table. His face was flushed when he turned to Ginny. “Mum, daddy let me fly, but don’t be mad at him, OK?” He stood up in his chair in his excitement, and started jumping up and down.

“Mikeal, sit down,” Ginny snapped at him.

Draco, Moira and Harry all looked at each other in uncomfortable silence as Ginny almost threw the food on the table and stormed out.

Draco looked at Miki. “Hey kid, you know, I think I’m gonna be afraid tonight. Do you think that you can sleep on my side of the castle?”

“Sure, Uncle Dray. Is that all right daddy?”

“Sure mate.” Harry looked at Draco, “Thanks, I better go talk to her.”

Moira laughed. “I think that you better do a lot more than just talk to her Harry. She is beyond angry.”

With a sigh, he stood and left the kitchen and went up to Ginny’s room and knocked on the door. “Gin, we need to talk.”

“Go away, Harry.”

“No, I won’t, Ginny. Open up the door, now!”

“You touch that door, Potter, and I’ll hex you within an inch of your life.”

He placed his hand on the door lock. “Alohamora.”

The door flew open and he cast a shield that caused Ginny’s hex to bounce off harmlessly and rebound on to the newly repaired French doors with explosive results.

“Expeliarmus!” He was angry now, and he crossed the room in three steps. “Don’t you ever do that again, Genevra! I will not be attacked in my own home.”

“You better get used to it, Harry, when you behave like an arse, I’ll treat you like an arse!”

“What are you angry about, Ginny?”

“Why would you take Miki flying? Do you have any idea what you’ve done? He won’t be able to keep this to himself; he’s a kid. His natural enthusiasm is going to be over-powering. Even if he doesn’t intend to...”

Harry yelled right back. “...you know, we just had a fight a couple of weeks ago because you wanted me to tell him about it. Now you are mad because I did. In the name of Merlin, Ginny, make up your mind!”

“Telling him about it and showing him are two completely different things, Harry, and you know that!”

“No, I don’t! It was going to happen eventually anyway, as you so aptly pointed out to me.”

“Don’t you dare put this on me! It was stupid and you know it!”

Harry threw his hands in the air. "You are absolutely around the bend." He turned and went through the door, slamming it behind him. He went to his room, slammed his door and paced.

Within moments Ginny threw the door open and Harry glared over his shoulder at her intrusion.

"Around the bend? I'm around the bend? I'm not the one who took a Muggle five year old flying on a broomstick in broad daylight! I think you better rethink who the barmy one is here, Potter!"

"You can't have it both ways, Ginny! Either you wanted me to tell him or you didn't."

Ginny shook her head. "FINE, if you want to act like you don't know what I'm talking about, go right ahead!" She stormed out the door slamming it in her wake and returned to her room, once again with a crash.

Not thirty seconds later, Harry left his room and re-entered hers. "What's this really about, Ginny? You aren't normally this irrational."

"Irrat...Oh, I don't believe this. Irrational? I'm trying to protect everything you've got here and I'm being irrational! Well, you can just go to HELL."

"I THINK I'M ALREADY THERE! Can you even tell me, what I've done to upset you so much? So I took Miki for a ride. Wizarding parents do it all the time. I put a Disillusionment Charm on us, we stayed on the property, and we kept low. Everything that I could have done to protect him and the castle, I did. I told him about the importance of secrecy. Ginny, I am sincerely at a loss here." He stopped yelling and lowered his voice and looked at her pleadingly. "Please, Ginny, tell me why what I did that was so wrong."

She had her back to him and she held herself rigid and aloof. "Because, Harry, now it is just a matter of time before he let's something slip and it causes all sorts of trouble with teachers and doctors and anyone else that meddlesome Muggles can think of. It's one thing to do this among our own, but Muggles, Harry?"

He moved to stand in front of her and lifted her chin to force her to look at him, but she pulled out of his grasp and began to pace. With a sigh he sat on her bed and laid his head back against the headboard.

She turned to face him. "Harry, I want you to leave."

He didn't open his eyes. "No, we are going to talk about this and get it resolved if it takes all night."

"I'm done talking, I just want to go to bed."

"It's only 7:35; plenty of time before bed."

"I need to see to Miki."

"Draco and Moira are keeping him tonight."

She glared at him. "Well, you have just thought of everything, haven't you?"

"No. I haven't thought of a way to get you to tell me what's really bothering you. I haven't figured out why all of a sudden, you and I are like oil and water, and I haven't figured out, why I am so damned in love with you; but I am. So, I'll ask you again Ginny, what is really wrong?"

"I'm frightened, all right? I have never lived without magic before. I'm scared that it is only a matter of time that the Muggles will find out and come after us. Maybe even take Miki away."

She stood in front of him with her arms wrapped around herself and tears sliding down her face.

Harry stood then kissed her forehead, then again lifted her chin and gently wiped at the tears with his thumbs. "Ginny, love, don't cry. It will be fine. I won't let anything happen to our family. You trust me, don't you?"

"Of course I trust you, Harry. It's just that...that..."

“...that you don’t know what to expect from the Muggle world; and you would rather avoid all possibility of problems. Am I close?”

Ginny nodded, sorrow shining in her eyes, then she walked into Harry’s arms.

He chuckled. “Hey...” he said softly, “...wasn’t it just a couple of weeks ago that you wanted me to see that problems exist no matter how we are living?” He tightened his arms around her and kissed her head. “Ginny, I love you, even if you are so confused that you can’t sort out your feelings. I know exactly what you are going through. I used to live through it every summer when I lived with the Dursley’s. I went from nine months of being encouraged to use magic; in fact *having* to if I wanted to save my own life, to a summer that I was punished if I even said the word ‘magic’.

She snuggled her head into the hollow of his neck and closed her eyes, “I always feel better when you hold me, Harry. I’m sorry I’m being such a git.”

He sighed and pushed her away so that he could look into her eyes. “Ginny, I wouldn’t have you any other way. You are the only one in my life that has treated me like ‘Harry’ and not like ‘The-Boy-Who-Lived’. Don’t stop telling me how you feel, or what to do.” Then he laughed. “Of course, that doesn’t mean that I am going to do what you tell me to do, but the making up is sure fun.” He grinned at her and pulled her closer again.

She giggled, sniffed a little, and then kissed his neck. “Yes, it is.”

He kissed her head again and rested his cheek against her hair. “Ginny, come with me, I have something for you.” He took her hand, kissed her palm then pulled her toward the door.

He pulled her to his room and sat her on his bed. “Ginny, just before I married...” He stopped as if the name he were about to say left a bad taste in his mouth.

“...Hermione,” she supplied.

Harry nodded, then continued. "I went to my vault at Gringotts, looking for something that Remus told me was there. Before the memorial service for my parents, he took something that he knew would mean a great deal to me when I was older. I am surprised, really, that with the death of both of my parents and supposedly Peter, and Sirius being sent to Azkaban, that he had the forethought of mind to get them." Harry shook his head in disbelief.

"Anyway..." he continued, "...When Vince was here for the custody hearing, I gave him my vault key and asked him to send them to me."

"Harry, what?"

He smiled. "I'm getting to that." He went to his dresser drawer and pulled out an emerald green velvet box that was about three inches square. He held the box so that she could see it. "These belonged to my father. They were given to him by his father and his father before him and so on and so forth." Harry spun his hand in the air trying to indicate time in antiquity. "Suffice it to say, that they have been in the Potter family for a very long time."

He took her hand and again kissed her palm. "Ginny, I love you so much. I love how you look in the morning when your hair is mussed. I love how your eyes twinkle when you are excited; just like they are doing now." Then he chuckled. "And I love how you blush, just like you are doing now."

She laughed. "Stop teasing me, Harry."

"Oh, OK. I love all of the little things that you do each day to keep me and Miki in order. I know I don't say it enough but I do notice. I love how you do everything with passion, throwing your whole heart into it. I love your strength. I love your tenderness.

Ginny, you are more important to me than my own life. I have given this a lot of thought and I have come to some very specific conclusions. I want to be the last person you see before you go to sleep at night; I want to be the first person you see when you wake up." He laughed and shook his head, "And Merlin help me, I want to fight like cats and dogs until we both want to kill each other; and I

want to hold you and make sure that nothing harmful ever touches you.

“I want to see the lust and passion in your eyes when we make love, and know that I put them there. I want you to grasp on to me as you struggle to bring our children into the world. I want to witness that miracle because I can’t believe that you would do that for me. I can’t conceive of anyone else that I would want to be the mother of my children.

“I want to be there when life gets difficult for us. I want to be your refuge against the world. With you I am whole but without you I would feel hollow, like my heart had been stolen from my chest.

“I don’t know how I have lived without you up to this point, but I am smart enough to know that I want to correct that oversight. You are my past, my present, and my future. I want to be the man that you call ‘husband.’ I love you Ginevra Weasley, and...”

Here he faltered a moment because the emotion had welled up to form a tight knot in his throat. He took a deep breath and swallowed against the obstruction and whispered, “and Ginny, if you could see your way through, I would be greatly honored if you would consent to be my wife. Please say yes and I will spend my life making certain that you never regret that decision. Please, Ginny, marry me.”

He opened the box; inside on a bed of black velvet were three beautiful gold and silver bands. The first, consisted of metal strands that were woven into an intricate pattern forming a celtic knot at the top, that held the blood red stone, symbol of the Potter family for time immemorial. The second, four impossibly thin strands, two of silver, and two of gold, braided together into a simple wedding band. The third was identical to, but larger than, the second, obviously a man’s band.

He took the ring with the stone out and showed it to Ginny, who held out her shaking left hand and allowed him to slip it on her finger. The ring magically fit itself to her finger and almost seemed to hum in satisfaction.

Harry's brows lifted in question and he looked at the ring again. "Well I'll..."

"What, Harry?"

He shook his head. "Ah...nothing."

She grabbed his hand and looked into his eyes. "Are we really going to start out by keeping secrets from each other? Tell me."

With a sigh, he smiled. "Well, alright, but I really don't think that this is the time to talk about it; but since you insist...When I asked...that other person to marry me, I tried to give her this ring."

"She didn't want it?"

"Oh, she wanted it all right. Even wore it for about two hours, but the ring never adjusted itself to her. At one point it was so big that there was no way that it would stay on her finger. Then it got so tight that it was cutting off the circulation. And it squealed."

"It...squealed?"

"Yeah, like it didn't want to be there. The Potter family ring rejected her. I wish I would have listened, but I just didn't understand what it meant. Anyway, I bought her another ring. I think she was always, umm...insulted, I guess, would be the best word, insulted because of that ring. I was half afraid to give it too you, in case it did the same thing.

"It looks beautiful on your hand, Gin; but...you still haven't answered the question. Will you marry me?"

She laughed and hugged him tightly. "Of course, Harry. If you hadn't asked soon, I would have asked you, you git!"

"Git? Git? I put my heart on the line and you call me a git? I've never been so insulted." He took her hand. "I want the ring back. Give it here."

She laughed. "Touch that ring, Potter, and you are dead meat!" Then she jumped into his arms and started spreading kisses across his face."

Laughing, he teased. "Gin, you keep missing. Then he captured her lips in a long sensuous kiss that took both of their breaths away.

"Well, I am kind of new at this, Harry. Perhaps I will have to practice some more."

"Good! I'll be your target," and pointed to his lips. "Right here."

She pushed away from him with a twinkle in her eye. "No, I'm too tired to practice right now. Maybe later." She backed away with a mischievous smile.

Harry slowly started walking toward her, not saying a word; but he had a feral gleam in his eye.

"Now, you just stay over there, Mr. Potter!" Ginny said as she backed away from him.

Harry said nothing, but narrowed his eyes and stalked toward her; Ginny backed up until she stepped back against the wall. A slow smile spread across his face; and Ginny giggled and tried to dart past him. He reached out an arm and caught her. "Ahh, not so fast my little snitch; come here."

She giggled as he pulled her against him. "I think you are mistaken sir, I am not a snitch, I am a bludger." She elbowed him in the ribs and with an "oof," he let her go. She ran out of the room laughing.

"Oh, you are going to pay for that, Ginevra Weasley." He immediately gave chase. She flew down the corridor, slid down the banister, and bolted for the kitchen with Harry not far behind her.

She almost knocked Draco over and yelled over her shoulder. "Sorry, Dray. Stall him."

But Harry heard her and dodged around Draco. "Someone is going to die tonight, Dray, and I really don't want it to be you."

Draco watched the two of them, and shook his head. "Playing or serious, Potter?"

"Very, very serious." He now had her trapped in the pantry. He leaned against the door and smiled at the blonde. "So, Draco, how are you tonight?"

The door behind him thumped several times. "Well, it's a long story Potter, are you up for it?"

The door pushed against him again and made Harry readjust his purchase. "Sure, Dray, I have all night," he laughed.

Draco sat down at the table and picked up a cup of coffee and took a sip, then started turning the pages of the newspaper lying there. "Hey, Potter, you want to hear your horoscope?"

"Sure, what does it say?"

"Today you will finally remember that you are dealing with a really clever witch that can apparate!"

Harry looked at him with a blank stare, then stood away from the door. He slowly cracked it to see inside. "It's empty!"

Draco laughed. "Are you really surprised?" He went back to his paper. "Dolt!"

Harry paused long enough to give Draco a scathing look and was gone with a 'pop' himself.

He Apparated into Ginny's room, just moments before she backed in, searching the corridor for signs of Harry. "Looking for someone?"

She gave a yelp and spun around to grin mischievously at him. "Harry, I was looking for you."

"Ummhmm, well you found me. You win the prize, kiss me."

"I thought I won the prize, not the booby prize." Her eyes were twinkling.

Harry tilted his head slightly and grinned. "Oh, you are an imp, aren't you?" His hand shot out and grabbed her wrist and pulled her to him. He threaded his right hand through her hair and his left around her waist.

"Harry..."

He lowered his lips to hers and they forgot all else. She stumbled away from him and looked at him in wonder, then rushed back for another. She started spreading kisses across his face again. "Harry, I want to get married now. I don't want to wait."

He laughed. "I think your mum and dad might take exception to that, not to mention the fact that you would get me into serious trouble with rest of your family. The evil Harry Potter stole away the only Weasley girl without even giving them a chance to throw a huge event that the whole wizarding world would be invited to. Your mom would kill me, Gin."

She cringed. "I really don't want a big to-do Harry. Do you?"

He shook his head. "No, I went through that the first time. I would really like it to be just us, family and a few friends; and for Merlin's sake, no reporters. Hey, I have an idea, let's go now, just you and me and Miki and have Draco and Moira as witnesses. Then in a little while, we can go to England and let your mum have her day. That way, everyone will get what they want. What do you think?"

Ginny jumped into his arms, and kissed him again. "I can be ready in 15 minutes."

Harry looked at his watch and frowned, "Hmm, Well, Ginny, as gratified as I am that you want to marry me, the office is probably closed now. We will have to wait at least until tomorrow morning."

Her face fell in disappointment. "Oh, right. Well, then, tomorrow morning it is."

"Great, I'll go find Draco and ask him if he and Moira can come with us in the morning."

The two separated, then stopped, looked at each other and ran into each others arms for another kiss, before they separated again with smiles at each other.

Harry found Draco where he left him in the kitchen. He went around to the other side of the table and grabbed the newspaper out of his grasp and set it down on the chair next to him. "Draco, what are you doing tomorrow morning?"

"Well, for starters; sleeping. What's it to you?"

"I have something more important for you and Moira to do in the morning."

Draco reached his wand out and whispered. "Accio newspaper. If it doesn't include sitting at my breakfast table until about noon, I'm not interested." He opened the paper, snapped it and buried himself in it again.

Harry pushed down the middle of the paper and smiled. "Even if I tell you that I need you to be best man at my wedding?"

Draco dropped the paper to the table and stared at Harry. "Wedding?"

Harry grinned and nodded.

Draco snorted and leaned back in his chair. "Well, it may take you a while to get into gear, Potter, but once you do, you don't let grass grow under your feet. What time?"

"Well, government offices don't open until about 9:00, adjust accordingly."

"There is only one 9:00 in the day, and it is not in the morning Potter."

"Look Draco, I will buy you a cup of coffee, OK?"

"A double mocha latte with whipped cream and chocolate sprinkles?"

Harry laughed. "Double sprinkles."

“I’ll hold you to that, Potter. I’ll go talk to Moira.” He rolled his eyes. “I am certain she will be thrilled,” he said as he stood up and left the kitchen.

Ginny went to Moira and Draco’s wing and went to the room that Miki stayed in when they watched him and sat on the bed and watched him play for a while. “Miki, can you and I have a talk?”

“Yes, mum.” He crawled up into her lap and smiled.

“You know I love you, right?”

He hugged her. “I love you too, mum.”

“Good. I have a question for you...” the door opened and Harry walked in. “It’s nice to know that we are on the same wave length, Gin.”

Harry sat on the bed next to his son. Mikeal crawled into his lap. “Mum and I are talking, daddy.”

Ginny reached out and took Miki’s hand and gave it a little squeeze. “You know that I love your daddy, right Miki.”

He nodded his head and put his finger in his mouth. Harry removed the digit as Ginny continued. “Well, tomorrow morning, daddy and mum are going to go to the court and get married.”

“You mean daddy is gonna ‘dopt you too?”

They both laughed. “Well, it’s a little different mate; but close.”

Ginny continued and looked lovingly at Harry. “The only difference will be that daddy and mum will be in the same bedroom rather than having separate rooms.”

“You still gonna be my mum?”

“Absolutely mate.” Harry answered. “Now we will be a real family.”

“Weren’t we a family already?”

“Well, yeah.”

“Can I play with my cars now?”

Harry chuckled. “Sure thing, Miki. Hey...” Harry looked at his watch, “You have about 15 minutes then you have to get a bath.”

Miki stuck his lip out. “I hate baths.”

Harry laughed. “I know, kiddo.”

Ginny kissed him on the forehead and Harry ruffled his hair, then they both left him to play.

Chapter 15 – Bachelor Party?

Ginny put an arm around Harry's waist. "So what did Draco say?"

"I had to bribe him with coffee."

She laughed. "Typical."

Harry took her hand and pulled her closer. "C'mere, you."

Ginny cuddled into him and put her head on his shoulder. "Harry, is this really happening?"

Harry chuckled. "Yeah, finally. There's nothing dense about me. You were there all along. Gin, are you still upset with me?"

She shook her head. "No, I probably shouldn't have been in the first place. Sometimes I *can* be irrational, just like you said."

"No, Ginny, not irrational, passionate. I know that there is a difference. When I'm angry though, I tend to not want to see that. It's one of my many short comings. Do you forgive me?"

In answer, she wound her hands around the back of his neck and pulled him into a slow sensuous kiss; she molded her body to his and felt his immediate response to her. After a long, long time, Harry slowly pulled away. He was breathing heavily and his heart was threatening to beat out of his chest.

"I think I need a cold shower." His voice seemed somehow choked. "Can you make sure...umm..." he waved a hand towards Miki's door.

She laughed. "Miki?"

He nodded. "Miki. Can you make sure Miki gets ready for bed?" These things were said while backing away from her. "I'll see you in the morning." He turned his back on her and mumbled as he walked away. "Blimey!"

He turned the corner and ran straight into Draco who was leaning against the wall. "That was quite the show, Potter. I was going to say

something typically snide and very, very clever, but it didn't seem right somehow."

"I appreciate it, Draco." Harry took a deep breath and ran his hand through his hair.

Malfoy peeked around the corner; Ginny was nowhere to be seen. He looked at Harry, "You're a stronger man than I am, mate."

"Well, I..." But he didn't finish the statement when the two men heard Moira scream. Draco ran followed closely by Harry. Draco slammed into the room and saw the two girls hugging.

"What's wrong?" Draco demanded.

Moira ran over and hugged him. "Oh, Draco, isn't it wonderful? Ginny and Harry are getting married in the morning." She turned to Ginny. "Flowers, you need to have flowers." She turned back to her husband. "You and Harry go find flowers somewhere." She turned to Ginny, "What are your favorite Ginny?"

"Ahh, roses, definitely roses."

"You heard her boys, get roses...oh and some baby's breath. Go on shoo, out, get...and Harry, I don't want to see you on this side of the Manor again tonight. Do you understand me?"

Before he could answer, she had pushed the two men out of the room and closed the door with a decided snap.

Draco turned to Harry. "This is your fault!"

"What? All I did is ask Gin to marry me."

"Exactly!" He sighed, "All right, I suppose we have a job to do. What the bloody hell is baby's breath anyway?"

Harry shrugged his shoulders. "You're asking me? I think we are about to find out."

The two of them jumped into Draco's lam and were soon speeding down the road at an impossible speed.

"So, where do we find flowers?"

"At a florist shop dimwit! I'll bet they even know what baby's breath is."

"Alright, so where is the nearest florist?"

"Oh...well, there you have me."

The two were quiet for a long moment then looked at each other. Harry then began to smile. "Are you thinking what I am thinking?"

Together they laughed. "Mrs. Lee!"

At eight thirty-five Harry and Draco walked into the residence home. They found Mrs. Lee hard at work, bending over paperwork. Harry stuck his head in the door. "Hey, I thought I fixed it so you wouldn't have to do this all night long."

The dark head looked up and smiled. "Come in ke moopuna kâne, oh and Draco. Have a seat. I'm just working on some adoption papers. Cassie has new parents, or will have."

"Cassie? Wonderful!"

"Ahh, Mrs. Lee, is Nina asleep yet?"

"Not yet, I don't think. Go on, Draco, go say hello. When are you going to adopt that child?"

Draco looked sad. "Well, Mrs. Lee, it's a long story."

Draco disappeared out the door and the matron looked at Harry. "Well, what brings you here tonight ke moopuna kâne?"

"Flowers."

"Flowers?"

“Well, flowers and an invitation. You see, Ginny and I are getting married tomorrow morning.”

The woman bolted up and moved around the desk and crushed Harry in a bear hug. Then she let loose a string of Hawaiian that Harry could only begin to understand. The gist of it was, Congratulations, it's about time, and he thought something about 'oh my dear baby', but he couldn't be sure.”

Draco walked in carrying Nina and handed Harry the keys to the lam. “I'm going to put her to sleep, come back when you are done.” Then he turned and walked out.

Harry laughed and shook his head. “He has it bad.” Then he turned back to the older lady. “Ke kupuna wahine, do you know where I can find a florist this late at night?”

Her eyes literally danced. “Come with me ke moopuna kâne, I think you will be pleasantly surprised.”

She walked with Harry down a path to the little cottage that Harry knew was her home. He had never been there and wondered what she had up her sleeve.

He soon found out. She had a garden of beautiful tropical flowers. The colors were breathtaking and the perfume filled the air.

She proudly showed off her garden and looked at Harry. “Well, what do you think ke moopuna kâne?”

“I think Ginny will love them!”

They gathered a bundle of the tropical flowers. Harry had to keep reminding her that it was going to be a very small wedding to keep her from uprooting her entire garden. He still left with many more flowers than he thought was necessary.

“Ke kupuna wahine, will you come tomorrow morning? We will be at the government offices at nine o'clock in the morning.”

Her face became like a thunder cloud. "You absolutely will not, ke moopuna kâne. You will be married here, not in some dusty office."

"But grandmother..."

"No buts, Harry. You will come here."

When she used his given name, he knew that she had spoken the last word. He sighed kissed her on the cheek. "I am absolutely certain, Ke kupuna wahine, that it will be beautiful and everything that Ginny deserves. We do need to get a license however, so we are going to have to go to the government offices anyway, and what about a minister. At the courthouse, the judge would..."

"You just don't worry about it, ke moopuna kâne. I will have someone here. You get the license and don't worry about anything else."

"As you wish, Ke kupuna wahine," Harry sighed in surrender. "I'll go get Draco and get these flowers to the girls." He leaned over and kissed her on the cheek again. "I'll see you tomorrow."

Harry returned to find Draco rocking Nina and talking softly to her. He was shocked as he watched the blond reach up and wipe a tear from his eye.

He walked in. "Hey, you ready to go."

"Oh, yeah, sure. Let me just lay her down." Draco laid the baby down and covered her with a light blanket and cuddled her soft hair just for a moment. "OK, let's go."

The two men walked out and went out to the car. Draco looked at the array of flowers in the back then back at Harry, "Potter, those aren't roses. Even I know that."

"Right in one."

"Moir and Ginny said roses."

"Well, they're just going to have to live with it."

“Oh yeah, well you get to tell them about it. I’m not going to be anywhere near when you do.”

“You try telling that to Mrs. Lee. She doesn’t take no for an answer. In fact the wedding is going to be here.”

“Wuss!”

“It’ll be fine, you’ll see. Besides, Ginny deserves more than a wedding in a dusty old courtroom, by a chap who could care less.”

They got into the car and headed back to the Manor. It was quiet for a while then Harry looked at Draco, “Why not adopt her?”

“I can’t!”

“Why not?”

“I just can’t, and I don’t want to talk about it, OK?”

“Draco...”

“Harry, drop it!”

“All right, all right! It’s just that I know you love her, and she loves you, and...”

“...And I said I didn’t want to talk about it, Potter. Can you wrap your little pea brain around that?”

“Grump!”

Draco didn’t even respond to that, and the rest of the trip was made in silence.

When they arrived back at the Manor, Harry tried to make Draco take the flowers to the girls. “Moirs threatened me. I’m not allowed over there.”

“Yeah, well, you broke it, you fix it. I’ll be in the kitchen with the first-aid kit.”

“Now who’s the wuss?”

Harry took the flowers up to the girls and knocked on the door.

“Dray?”

“No, it’s me.”

“Harry, I told you...”

“Hey, Draco was too scared to come up. I had too.”

Ginny came to the door and opened it. “Harry, what did you do?”

“Nothing major really, no roses.”

“Is that all?”

“Ginny, get away from the door, its bad luck.”

“Oh bother that, Moira. I’m talking to Harry.”

Harry took her hand and pulled her into the corridor, he showed her the flowers. “So, what do you think?”

“Oh, Harry, they are perfect.” She leaned down and smelled them then repeated, “perfect!”

“Well, there’s more. I hope you don’t mind. I made some other arrangements about tomorrow. Well actually, Grandmother sort of took the bull by the horns. We are getting married there. I thought it would be better than getting married in some dusty old room at the courthouse, and...”

She threw her arms around his neck. “Harry, as long as the end result is that I am Mrs. Harry James Potter, it’s perfect!”

“That’s good, ‘cause she wouldn’t have it any other way. Besides, it *will* be nicer. All we have to worry about is getting the license. She is taking care of everything else.”

"I can just imagine. If the minister is wearing a grass skirt, I may bust up laughing."

"Don't you dare, you would insult her. Look, just expect it and if it isn't that way, well then, you will be surprised. Now, kiss me, then you better get back in there with Moira. She is probably having kittens about right now."

Ginny leaned forward and whispered, "She's driving me nuts. This is turning out to be more than either of us wanted."

"Yeah, but take my word for it, weddings are not for the couple getting married, they are for the family; and let's face it, these people are our family."

"Now see, that's one of the bazillion reasons that I love you." She started playing with the buttons on his shirt.

Harry took her hands in his and kissed each finger tip. Then he turned her around and gave her a little shove toward the door. "Go!"

"But..." She turned back around and kissed him passionately. After only a moment he pulled away.

"Ginny, if you don't turn around and go back into that room this minute, I may just ravish you right here in the hallway. You wouldn't want that now, would you?"

Ginny stood there thinking for a long time.

"Ginevra Molly Weasley, get in that room now."

"Spoil sport."

"That's me. Good night, love, I'll see you in the morning." Harry turned and left her standing in the hallway and she huffed. "You're not supposed to be that strong. You're supposed to scoop me up into your arms and make mad passionate love to me all night long."

"Tomorrow night, I'll do anything you want." He called back down the hall with a chuckle. Then he stuck his head around the corner again and grinned. "If it is any consolation to you Ginny, I want you too."

She stuck her tongue out at him and went back into the room.

He went to the library and found Draco there with a tall glass of bourbon. "I figured you'd come here. Need a drink?"

"Several, this may be the longest night of my life."

Draco held up his cup. "To the trials and tribulations of celibacy."

Harry laughed. "May they ever reap sweet rewards." He clicked Draco's glass and downed a good portion of the amber liquid. "Do you want to play chess?"

"Sure, why not? Boy, we are really pathetic. Here it is, the night before your wedding, and we are sitting here with each other acting like a couple of old men. We should be out with girls jumping out of cakes and doing lap dances; getting impossibly drunk and waking up tomorrow morning in jail with barely a half hour to go before the wedding."

Harry wrinkled his nose. "No, thank you. You know that celibacy thing? Well, I don't want it to continue for one moment longer than it has to. If Ginny had to bail me out of jail, I may not get any for a good deal of time longer than tomorrow. So, chess it is; and if you want cake, I think there is some in the pantry."

"Oh now that's class, Potter; cake and bourbon." He wrinkled his nose in disgust. "I think I'll pass on the cake."

"Then set up the board, it's going to be a long night."

Chapter 16 – The Wedding

“THEY’RE IN THE LIBRARY, MUM!” Mikeal’s five-year-old voice startled the two men into wakefulness.

Harry sat up and ran a hand through his hair. “What time is it?”

“Half seven.” Said a voice from the door.

He looked up and smiled at Ginny, then walked toward her. She was wearing her robe and her hair was in curlers, but she held a cup of coffee out and handed it to him. “Good morning, beautiful.”

“Oh, quit teasing, Harry.”

“I’m not teasing. You just don’t know how beautiful you really are. So, I have this plan. I’m going to tell you every morning and every evening until you begin to believe me. Then I’ll continue to tell you, just because it’s fun to see you blush like you are doing right now. Kiss me.”

She did; a long sensuous kiss that left Draco feeling the need to go find Moira.

He shook his head. “Get a room you two.”

“First things first, Draco.” Harry answered him without taking his eyes off Ginny.

“I brought you some pain potion, Harry.”

“Don’t need it.”

“You mean you didn’t drink yourselves into a stupor last night?”

“And miss one moment of today, not on your life.”

She kissed him again. “That’s another reason I love you; you always know the perfect thing to say.” She turned and walked away. “I’ll see you later.”

He watched Ginny go then took a deep breath and released it slowly. "I don't know what I did to deserve her, Dray."

"Me either, Potter. I wonder the same thing about Moira every day. I guess, mate, that we just have to accept that they are slumming and be happy for it." Draco clapped him on the back. "I suppose we ought to go get ready."

Harry went to his room and showered and dressed in a dark suit. Mikeal was sitting on the bed watching as Harry stood at the mirror and turned to look at the reflection. "What's mum wearing, mate?"

"A long white dress wif green leafs."

He looked again at his reflection. "I look like I'm going to a funeral." He took out his wand and touched the jacket and pants in turn, turning the dark grey material to white. The white silk shirt he was wearing became a beautiful Kelly green. "There, that's better. What do ya think, mate?"

"You look pretty, daddy."

"Pretty huh, well, I guess that will have to do. Why don't you go find out if mum is ready?"

"Mum and Aunt Moira took Uncle Dray's car and left. We're going to ride in our car, daddy."

"OK, then, we'll go get Uncle Dray and let's get this show on the road. Wait a minute, Miki. Do you want a white suit like daddy's?"

"Uh huh."

"All right come here." Harry knelt down and transformed Miki's suit as well. "Now, we're ready."

They started out the door and Miki called Harry back. "Mum says don't forget the rings, daddy."

Harry hit himself in the head. "Ahhh, the rings. He took them out of the box and slipped them into his pocket.

By the time they arrived at the courthouse, Ginny and Moira had been there, gotten the license and Ginny had signed her part. They were expecting Harry when he arrived. All he had to do was sign and leave again.

"Well, I'll give them this, they sure are efficient."

Draco laughed. "You don't know Moira, she leaves nothing to chance."

"Thank goodness. Do you see this line here; it's talking about blood tests. We didn't have blood tests." Harry whispered.

Draco shrugged. "You carrying some deadly disease that we should all know about?"

"Don't think so."

"Then let's get out of here, the girls are waiting for us."

Harry swept Miki up. "OK, let's go mate."

When they arrived, they were approached by teenage girls who put green leafy crowns on their heads.

Draco snorted. "Oh good, I get to go to the wedding as a tree. How delightful."

"It's traditional, Dray. Quit complaining."

"Sure you would like it, it covers up that mop you call hair. Me, I spent all morning getting my hair just right."

Harry looked disgusted. "You're such a girl."

When Mrs. Lee came into the room, Harry smiled. "*Grandmother*, you look beautiful."

She straightened up the lapels on his jacket. "I feel like my own baby is getting married. I only have one item of advice for you, be good to your bride, *Grandson*, or I'll kick your haole butt back to the mainland."

Harry started laughing. "I believe you would, too. Don't worry *Grandmother*, Ginny is in good hands." He kissed her cheek. "You gonna give me away?"

She laughed. "No, who would have you?" Then she swatted his seat. "Get going. You have a beautiful wahine waiting for you." Then she turned to Draco. "And don't you look just good enough to eat."

He too, kissed her cheek. "Thank you, Mrs. Lee."

"Now, where's Mikeal?"

"I' right here, Mrs. Lee."

Her eyes glowed when she looked at the child. "Now, aren't you the spitting image of your daddy. Come here baby, give us a kiss."

Mikeal ran to her and gave her a big kiss.

"All right now scoot, all three of you."

Harry slipped the rings into Miki's pocket. "You give them to me when it's time, OK?"

"Yes, daddy."

He went out and noticed that the children and employees of the home were there. They were all dressed in their Sunday best and on their best behavior.

Mrs. Lee had out done herself. There was an arch woven with flowers. In the background there was the sound of falling water. On the ground there was a ring of beautiful flowers, in which, Harry was directed to stand.

When the Minister entered, Harry noticed with a smile, that he was dressed as normally as the rest of the small crowd.

Then Moira walked out and stood outside the flower ring. When Ginny came out, Harry forgot that there was anyone else there. She was stunning. Her dress was white with tiny embroidered green

leaves. The bodice fit tightly as did the sleeves that went down to her elbow. She had her red hair pulled back and it hung down in loose ringlets. The crown of flowers in her hair was covered by a simple piece of sheer chiffon.

As he watched her approach, he had to swallow down the lump that had formed in his throat. His lips formed her name as she approached him and took his hand, but no sound came. He brought her hand to his lips and closed his eyes as he kissed her palm.

He tore his eyes away from her only when the minister began to speak.

“Marriage is a sacred union, that transcends the boundaries of this Earth, and dwells with the most high God. It binds two souls together, and leads them, one with the other, to find their better selves.

“The family is a unit of strength, that is blessed by God and his angels and by taking this step today you are witnessing to God and His Heavenly beings, that you too, believe this to be so.

“Cling to each other for strength, support each other in trials, rejoice with each other in victories, and cry with each other in sorrows, for you will have all of these in your lives. Our God proves us with these things, and in turn we prove our God. For strength comes, not from ourselves, but from God, as does joy. Our God allows the trials and sorrows so that we might grow. Remember this always.

Harry squeezed Ginny’s hand because he noticed that she had tears in her eyes. He handed her his handkerchief and smiled as she dabbed at her eyes.

The minister looked at the assembled crowd and asked, “Is there anyone here who knows of a reason that these two should not be joined in the bonds of holy matrimony?” He waited only a moment then nodded to Harry.

Harry took both of her hands in his, and looked deeply into her eyes and repeated the words that the minister whispered. “I, Harry James Potter, take thee Ginevra Molly Weasley to be my lawfully wedded wife; to have and to hold from this day forward; for better; for worse;

for richer; for poorer; in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, forsaking all others for as long as we both shall live. Entreat me not to leave you, or to return from following after you, For where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. And where you die, I will die and there I will be buried. May the Lord do with me and more if anything but death parts you from me."

Harry bent down to Miki and smiled. "Do you have the ring, mate?"

Miki pulled out both rings and Harry took Ginny's and closed Miki's hand over the other. "Hold that safe for another minute, mate, all right?"

"Yes, daddy."

Harry stood and placed the ring on Ginny's finger and kissed it after he did.

Then the minister nodded to Ginny. She took a deep breath and closed her eyes. Harry squeezed her hand again and she smiled,

"I, Ginevra Molly Weasley, take thee Harry James Potter to be my lawfully wedded husband; to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse; for richer for poorer; in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, forsaking all others for as long as we both shall live. Entreat me not to leave you, or to return from following after you, For where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. And where you die, I will die and there I will be buried. May the Lord do with me and more if anything but death parts you from me."

Ginny looked at her son, and smiled. "Can I have daddy's ring, baby?"

He opened his hand and handed it to her.

"Thank you, sweetheart."

She looked at Harry and her hands shook as she placed the ring on his finger and squeezed his hand in excitement.

"By the powers vested in me, I now pronounce you husband and wife.

Harry stared at her in awe; and she at him. No words passed between them but there was unspoken communication there; promises for the future.

He lifted the veil and pulled her forward. He gave her a chaste kiss but his eyes spoke of passion and longing. He noted the twinkle in her eyes as well. Then they came together again, this time in a long searing kiss that those assembled would not soon forget.

The minister cleared his throat. "Ladies and gentlemen, May I present Mr. and Mrs. Harry James Potter."

Applause filled the small area, as they turned to face the small group. Then suddenly, Ginny started to laugh and threw herself into his arms. "Finally, you are mine, Harry!"

"I have been since you were ten. I just got a little side tracked for a while."

Mrs. Lee approached the couple with tears in her eyes, "Oh, my little ke moopuna kâne, I am so happy for you both. Take care of each other. Ginny, watch him like a hawk. You never know what kind of trouble he will get up to."

They both started laughing but Harry scolded her. "Ke kupuna wahine, don't give away all my secrets."

Ginny leaned forward. "I'll let you in on a little secret, *Grandmother*, he has been getting into trouble since he was very young, and he doesn't show any signs of slowing."

Harry laughed. "Oh, and you are the picture of innocence, are you?" He leaned over and whispered for only her to hear. "Write in any diaries lately, Ginevra?"

"Oh, you just had to bring that up."

“You betcha. If I’m going to be labeled a troublemaker, I’m not going down alone. In fact, if it hadn’t been for a certain someone, I never would have gone looking for the chamber.

Mrs. Lee laughed, and looked fondly at the two of them. “Ah children, humor is a good thing. Keep it always. Now, Anna has baked a cake, so come into the house.

Harry and Ginny followed the matron into the house along with the rest of the guests and the children.

Draco had found Nina and was carrying her around on his shoulder.

Harry took the opportunity to talk to Moira. “Why don’t the two of you adopt Nina? Draco is obviously in love with that baby.”

“You know, Harry, I don’t know. I’ve mentioned it several times. He always refuses. I even told him that someone would eventually come in and adopt her. Do you know what his response was? He said, “Well, she deserves better than I can give her. Without giving away too many family secrets, he won’t even discuss the two of us having children.”

Harry shook his head. “Maybe it has something to do with Lucius. That’s the only thing I can figure.”

Moira huffed at that. “That man has meddled in my life in more ways than I can count, and Draco doesn’t even acknowledge him. I can’t even imagine what it would be like if he were part of Draco’s life.”

“Well, be thankful for small blessings.” Harry said.

Ginny came over and joined Harry and Moira and followed their line of sight. “He sure is good with her. Why don’t you two adopt her?”

“That’s what we were just discussing, love.”

As if sensing that he was being talked about, Draco looked up at the three of them who were in turn staring at him with smiles on their faces. He rolled his eyes, then stood and took the baby to her room

for a nap. Moments later he came over to them. "Don't even give me the moon eyes, Moira. It's not going to happen."

She put her head on his chest. "But Dray, you look so sweet holding her."

"Moira..."

Harry leaned over to Ginny. "I think that is our cue to leave them alone. Do you want some cake?"

She nodded her head with a mischievous glint shining in her eye. "Yeah, beefcake!"

He couldn't help it, he cracked up. "Ginevra Potter, you are incorrigible!"

"Why, Harry Potter, that's the nicest thing that anyone has said to me all day."

He leaned over and whispered in her ear. "The day is young yet. If you play your cards right, you may yet hear many more nice things." He teased her earlobe with his lips and caused her to close her eyes and sigh. "Harry! There are too many kids around."

"Yeah, we really have to get out of here. Let's go have some cake so that we don't insult Anna or *Grandmother*, and then sneak out of here."

"What about Miki?"

"Moira and Draco are going to keep him."

But it wasn't to be. Mrs. Lee cornered them and began snapping all the traditional pictures. "You have to have pictures."

Ginny giggled at Harry's frustration. "I had to come here to get help with the flowers."

They cut the cake, fed each other, drank champagne, and all of the other traditional pictures that Mrs. Lee could think of.

Harry was getting antsy and was bouncing on the balls of his feet.

Draco seemed to notice and took pity on him. "Harry, you go, I'll waylay Mrs. Lee."

"Perfect, thanks Draco, I owe you one."

"Oh, and Moira and I and the kid are going to stay in a hotel tonight, so..."

"OK, so I owe you two! See you later."

Harry found Ginny again and pulled her close, "C'mon, we're getting out of here."

"Shouldn't we say good bye, Harry?"

"No! Let's go."

They sneaked out the door and into Harry's Maybach. "I was beginning to think that we would never get out of there. Then he turned and looked at his new wife and smiled and shook his head.

Ginny reached over and squeezed his hand. "It's amazing, isn't it?"

"Amazing doesn't begin to describe it, Gin. I don't have the words to describe what I am feeling right now. Can I tell you something?"

"Sure."

"Do you know that there isn't a day that goes by that I don't thank God for Lucius Malfoy!"

To say the least, that was not what Ginny expected to hear. "Harry, have you gone 'round the bend'?"

He laughed. "No, hear me out. It's because of Lucius that you came back into my life. If he hadn't broken into the flat..."

"Oh, now there you are wrong, Harry. I was looking for an excuse, to come after you on a legitimate basis. I didn't want to just show up on your doorstep without a compelling reason. I wasn't sure what

your...companionship status was. You could have been seeing someone."

He snorted. "Until you showed up, I had become a confirmed bachelor. I never wanted to get married again; in fact other than the time that I first started hanging with Draco, I never even dated...if you can consider partying, dating. That didn't last long. A couple of weeks tops. Oh, and in case you are wondering, I never..." He paused and looked at her, "...you know, with any of those girls either. Draco thought I had lost my mind. But I just wasn't interested."

"Good!" She sighed. "You know, its funny you should mention Lucius. Did I ever tell you what I had to go through to get that assignment?"

Harry shook his head. "Not really."

"Well, they didn't want to send me. They had a meeting that I just happened to find out about when I heard someone mention your name as I was walking by. Me being the nosy person that I am, stopped and listened. I watched where the guy went and followed him and sat down like I was supposed to be there." She shrugged. "I mean, the worst they could do was kick me out. However, no one questioned my presence there."

"Anyway, when I found out what was going on, I volunteered for the job. Much to my surprise, they gave it to me. That was until dad found out about it. He started calling in favors to get me taken off the case. I was never so angry in my life. In fact, it wasn't until I threatened to divorce myself from the family that he relented."

Harry gasped. "You did WHAT? Ginevra Potter, how could you do that?"

She smiled and took his hand. "For you, Harry, for you."

He shook his head again. "It will be amazing if your parents even talk to me again."

"Oh, they got over it. They are actually quite happy that we are together. It wasn't you that they objected to, Harry..."

"I know, Gin. It was Lucius. He's dangerous. I wouldn't want my daughter involved with him either." He was quiet for a while. "Do you realize how thrilled I was, that you showed up that day? I almost kissed Lucius on the mouth."

She cracked up. "Oh, I'd pay to see that!"

"That's a figure of speech, Imp."

Ginny sighed. "So, where are we going?"

"Home! Draco, Moira and Miki are going to the hotel. So we have the whole castle to ourselves."

"Don't care about the whole castle, Harry, just our bedroom."

Harry looked at the gleam in her eye and sped up.

Five minutes later, Harry pulled into the circle drive in front of the castle, ran around and opened Ginny's door. Once inside he scooped her up and ran up the steps to their room and walked in. He slowly released her legs and let her slide them to the floor as he kissed her.

Then his eyes widened. "Oh, Gin, I almost forgot." He let go of her and went to his chest of drawers. He brought out a small wooden triangular box with a white ribbon tied around it. He took her hand and led her over to the edge of the bed to sit. When he sat next to her he kissed her hand. "Ginny, you know as well as I do that my life is anything but normal. For good or for bad, that's just the way it is. I've learned to accept it. In some ways it really isn't fair of me to ask you to join me in that life. But, love, I am selfish. I want you with me."

"You will always have me to come to with anything when I am here, but there will be times when I won't be here. It was with that in mind that I bought you this," he indicated the box he held. He handed her the box and watched her open it. Inside was a perfect little hummingbird pin. It flew out of the box and flitted around her head. With a laugh she held out a hand and the pin landed and began to hum. The song was soothing and she suddenly felt the strains of the music wrap around her like a protective blanket. The tiny pin attached itself to her dress at the shoulder so that she could hear the

comforting music it sang. Then she jumped when she heard Harry say, "I love you, Ginny." But it didn't come from Harry, it came from the hummingbird.

"Oh, Harry, this is exquisite! I absolutely love it."

"I'm glad, Gin. If you are ever feeling sad or frightened or anything, keep the pin with you. You will have a piece of me with you."

She smiled but furrowed her brows. "A piece of you? Harry, what have you done?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "Not much really. When I bought it, the jeweler pricked my finger and let the bird drink the drop of blood. It is now directly connected to me. That's all."

"And you trust this jeweler?"

Harry laughed. "Yes, Ginevra, I'm not a fool you know. He's a friend of Dumbledore's."

"Well, that makes me feel better, I must say. I love it, Harry, thank you; and as long as we are giving gifts, I have something for you too. I'll be right back."

She ran from the room and went to her room and got a box for Harry. When she handed it to him he looked at her. "When did you have time for this?"

"Well, I had a little help from Fred and George."

He laughed. "Should I be concerned?"

"Well...it's Fred and George, isn't it! But I think it's safe."

He opened it and stared at it in awe. It was a small statue of a knight on a rearing horse. The detail was exquisite. "He's wonderful, Gin."

"He doesn't do anything special. He's just a Muggle item, but he reminded me of you. I actually bought him a long time before I got here. You are my knight in shining armor Harry. Corny, I know, but..."

“Not corny at all, love. I hope you always look at me like that.” He put the knight on his dresser and Ginny set the hummingbird next to it.

Harry turned to her. “C’mere, Love.”

Ginny walked into his arms and nuzzled his neck. “You are going to think I’m daft Harry, but after all of this, I’m a bit nervous.”

He smiled gently at his wife. “Daft? No, not at all. Me too a little, I guess. It’s like a starving man suddenly being presented with a feast. I mean, where do you start?”

Ginny pulled the loosened tie from around his neck and threw it on the floor. “Nice tux, where’d ya get it?”

“It’s just the ‘Brooks Brother’s’ transfigured. I looked like I was going to a funeral. How about you? Where’d you get the dress?” He reached under her hair and slowly pulled the zipper down.

“It’s Moira’s.”

“You, make it beautiful. When I first saw you in it, I almost forgot to breathe.”

“Ummmm,” She unbuttoned his jacket and helped him shrug out of it, then returned in front of him and gave it a toss.

“Hey, that’s an expensive suit.” he chuckled.

“You’re getting to be as bad as Draco.”

“Now, that is just plain mean.” He slid the sleeves off her shoulders and followed its decent with his lips.”

“Ummmm.” Ginny closed her eyes and reveled in the feeling, then began to undo the buttons on his shirt. “This color looks good on you...” She looked at him with an impish grin. “...But I bet that it looks better off of you.”

Harry smiled at the twinkle in her eye, then slid the thin straps of her slip down and followed it with his hands all down her side. Harry

hungrily took in the sight of her in just her bra and panties. "You are the most beautiful woman on this planet, Ginevra Potter. How was I so blessed?"

She was a little flushed with excitement and embarrassment, but she forgot that as Harry began kissing her. She allowed the feelings of longing and lust to sweep over her for a while before she undid the belt and fastening on his pants.

Harry noticed that her hands were shaking so he grabbed them both and placed a kiss on both palms, then whispered, "Love, take my robe and go to your room and come back when you are ready. I don't want you to be embarrassed; besides that will give me time to put my plan into action." He looked at her with a devilish glint in his eye."

"Oh, now I *am* nervous. What plan?"

"Never mind you, just go." He fetched his robe from the back of the bathroom door and wrapped it around her after she slid her arms in. "It looks a fair sight better on you, then it ever did on me."

She put her arms around his neck and kissed him. "I love you, Harry."

"How did I get so lucky?"

Her eyes twinkled. "Hmm, don't know, but you did."

Harry laughed, then turned her, pointed her toward the door and teasingly smacked her bum.

"Spouse abuse! Not even married three hours yet. You know, I can have this thing annulled.

Harry walked slowly to her with a smirk on his lips. "Well, if you really WANT to, I suppose that there isn't a whole lot that I will be able to do to stop you, except maybe this..." He took her in his arms and kissed her deeply and thoroughly. "Or this..." He rubbed a palm over her breast and lightly massaged. "Or this..." he reached around and pulled her tightly against him so that she could feel the pressing bulge there. "Should I go on?"

Ginny had her eyes closed as she reveled in the feelings that he was creating. She took a deep breath. "I'll be right back."

After she was gone, he went into the bathroom and magically altered the tub into a Jacuzzi. He conjured candles and lit each one with the tip of his wand. The room was filled with a soft romantic glow. Once he was satisfied with the results, he returned to the room and finished getting undressed and picked up the items that had been scattered over the floor.

Then he noticed, on the dresser there was a basket that hadn't been there before and he went to examine. There was a note from Draco and Moira.

Ginny and Harry,

We wish you the best. We decided that you couldn't have a wedding night without certain items:

First: Strawberries. A very sexy fruit, especially when you feed them to each other.

Second: Chocolate sauce, to dip the strawberries in. (Or anything else. Use your imagination)

Harry laughed here. "Thanks Dray." Then he continued reading.

Third: A bottle of the finest vintage champagne that money can buy at noon in a grocery store.

Fourth: Two champagne flutes.

Fifth: Various and sundry food items so that you don't have to emerge for a while. (Keep the knife away from Ginny, we don't want her to slit her wrists after being with you.)

And Sixth: Massage oil. It is magically enhanced to become your favorite scent when it is used.

Have fun.

Harry, celibacy sucks.

Draco and Moira

He picked up the basket and went to the bathroom with it then got into the warm bubbling water of the hot tub.

Moments later, he heard Ginny come in. "Harry?"

"In here, love."

Ginny walked into the bathroom and gasped. "Oh Harry, it's wonderful." When she looked at him it was with all the love she was feeling.

Harry had a lump in his throat as he looked at this vision he found himself married to. Her hair had been brushed out and now hung down her back in a shimmer of soft red curls. She wore a gown that made her look like a Greek Goddess. It was the purest white and fastened with one golden clasp on her right shoulder leaving the other shoulder bare. She looked directly at her husband, reached up and undid the clasp and let the silk slither to the floor with a soft whisper.

Harry stood as she approached the tub and offered her his hand to help her in. For a long moment, no words were spoken, there was no need. The passion burning in each of their eyes, communicated all that needed to be said. It spoke of love, promises for the future and the bonding of two souls together as one.

He pulled her closer and she could feel him, her cheeks flushed bright red as he placed quick tiny kisses along her cheeks, her nose, and her forehead, and then whispered, "Ginny, you have nothing to be afraid of here."

Ginny closed her eyes and pursed her lips together to keep the tears that were threatening to fall, in their proper place. She didn't want Harry to think that she was afraid of him. But she was so overwhelmed with emotion that she couldn't help shedding a tear or two.

Harry understood though and lifted her chin and kissed her tears, tasting the salt that lingered there.

"It's all right, Gin. I'm feeling the same thing. Come on, come sit. Let the warm water calm you down.

She took a deep breath and released it in a nervous reaction then looked at Harry. She smiled into the deep green pools. "I do love you, Harry. You know that don't you?"

His smile was gentle. "Of course I do."

She sat on the seat next to him and relaxed into the warm water. "Harry, you know that this is incredibly romantic and that I am going to expect this all the time."

"You *deserve* the best, all the time, love. Hey, I want to show you something. What is your favorite color rose?"

Without thinking about it she said, "Black."

He smiled but furrowed his eyebrows. "Black? Really? Why?"

"Several reasons really, first black because it is rare. Not many people can grow a truly black rose. Second, because the definition of black is the presence of all color. I'm greedy, Harry. I want it all. Is that weird?"

"Absolutely not! In fact, I think it is brilliant. OK, watch this. I've been practicing." Harry cupped his hands together and concentrated. As he pulled his hands apart, a beautiful black rose began to emerge between them. When it was finished, he handed it to Ginny.

Her smile was brilliant. "There are no thorns on the rose, Harry."

"Sure there is, there is one hidden in the leaves. The rest have been removed. Ginny, I will do my absolute best to keep the thorns out of your life. But just like this hidden one up here..." He gently pulled the leaves aside to show her the thorn in question, "...we will never know when it will prick us. But there lies the beauty. Even troubles can

be a good thing if you look deep enough.” He leaned over and kissed her.

“I didn’t know you were so poetic, and I didn’t know that you could do wandless magic. That was remarkable”

I’m just learning some of the finer points. I learned to do some while I was an Auror. And Dumbledore gave me some pointers before I left for Auror training years ago, but I never took the time to develop it fully. I was able to use it in my work, like when I did the Constrictor Bonds, but now I have tried to make it stronger. Cool, huh?”

“Way cool!” Ginny lifted it to her nose to smell it but there was no fragrance. She looked at Harry.

He shrugged his shoulders. “So, I don’t have it quite perfected.”

Then suddenly the petals began falling one by one into the water, and Ginny looked at him again with a teasing smirk.

“Oh all right, I don’t have it perfected at all.”

She laughed, and put the stem down on the side of the tub. “It’s wonderful, Harry.”

“So are you, love. Oh, I almost forgot. Draco and Moira sent a gift.” He showed her the note and she giggled. “Leave it to Draco.”

“You know, I really do like him, quite a lot. I wish things had been different back in school.” Then he sighed. “However, I really don’t want to talk about him at this particular moment.” He grabbed the bottle of champagne and popped the cork, then poured it into the flutes.

They just sat and talked for a while, drinking the champagne, feeding each other the strawberries.

Harry opened the jar of chocolate sauce, dipped a strawberry in and fed it to Ginny.

With an impish giggle, Ginny took the open jar, stuck her finger in and spread it on Harry's lips. She then proceeded to lick it off.

When the chocolate was gone, he took the jar and dipped two fingers in and spread it across her neck, and just a dab on the tip of her nose. He kissed her nose and proceeded to lap up the chocolate off her neck. "You taste good enough to eat, Ginevra."

Ginny, with a grin that Harry was quickly learning to be leery of, took the jar and drew a smiley face on his chest.

Harry only shook his head and chuckled, as she pushed him back on the seat in the tub and straddled his hips, leaned forward and licked the chocolate off his chest.

Harry leaned back and closed his eyes and reveled in the sensations she was creating. When she quit, he opened one eye and was graced with an impish grin and a couple of fingers full of the chocolate. He saw it coming toward his face and he caught it and forced her hand back and he used her hand to spread the sauce on her breast.

When he followed the trail of chocolate that he had created with his tongue, the play suddenly turned serious, and Ginny moaned quietly.

She leaned forward and nuzzled his neck not caring that the chocolate was smearing between the two of them.

Then suddenly, Harry was a little confused. Ginny was cuddled into his neck but wasn't moving. "Ginny, is there something wrong?" He moved so that he could look at her face. She was beat red and was biting her bottom lip and wouldn't look at Harry.

"What's wrong, Ginny?"

Her voice was small and she was very embarrassed. "I just realized that I am sitting in a hot tub on your lap and we're not – I'm – and you're..." She sighed. "Oh hell!"

The 'Oh hell,' did it. Harry was trying very hard not to laugh. He knew that that would embarrass her, but it was truly one of the hardest

things that he had ever done. He pulled her closer again and buried his face in her hair. "It's OK, Ginny. I don't mind."

Even though he wasn't laughing she could hear it in his voice, and she pulled back and looked at him. "It's not funny, Harry!"

"I'm not laughing, Gin." Then he bit the insides of his cheeks to keep from doing just that.

She pursed her lips together and glared at him and twisted his left nipple.

"Ow, Ginny that hurt." Then he did laugh.

She splashed him. "You're laughing at me!" Her eyes flashed with humor.

He splashed her back, "Yeah, I am now, silly. How did you realize that we were naked all of a sudden?"

"Well, I – you – oh, never mind, wretch!"

Harry's eyes widened. "Wretch?"

"Wretch!"

"Imp!"

"Poop!"

"I love you, and you've got chocolate, just there." He grabbed a sponge and soaped it up and washed the chocolate off of her. She grabbed the sponge and returned the favor. As she worked, she giggled. "You know, when I imagined this, I didn't see me as being such a ninny. I had decided that I was going to..." then she turned red again.

Harry chuckled. "Will you stop that? You have no reason to be embarrassed."

"Well, if you knew what I was thinking..."

He waggled his eyebrows at her impishly. "So, why don't you tell me?"

"Well, when you are brought up in a family of all boys, you can't help but hear – things. I learned all sorts of things from them."

Harry frowned, but she hurried to head him off.

"No, no Harry. They would never talk if they knew I was listening. I sort of listened to them when they thought they were alone and – well, I learned a lot of things that men like.

"In my imagination, I do all sort of things that my brothers said they liked, and I'm not some bumbling oaf who..."

Harry interrupted her. "Hey, stop right there. I did not marry a bumbling oaf. I married the most beautiful, the smartest, and the most loving woman that I have ever met." He waggled a finger at her. "I will not allow you to insult my choice in a wife, even if it is you. Do you understand me?" His scold was light but she knew he meant it.

She kissed his finger. "Yes, sir."

He settled back again and pulled her with him. "Now, why don't you tell me about some of these things and we'll decide what we are going to do," he said with a laugh.

She was still embarrassed, so she leaned forward and whispered in his ear. As she started telling him some of the things she had heard, Harry's eyes got wider and wider and finally his mouth dropped open. "Sweet mother of Merlin, Ginny. Your brothers are – Lucky!" He looked at her in awe, "And you're willing to do those things?"

Ginny nodded her head, still blushing.

"What are we doing in the hot tub?" He stood up and grabbed a towel and dried himself off and helped Ginny step out and handed her a towel and pulled her over to the bed, turned the blankets down and dove in, pulling her with him. "Come here, you."

&

Much, much later, Ginny was laying next Harry and walking her fingers along his chest, "What are you thinking, Harry?"

He was quiet for a while, then he turned to his side and looked at her. "You'll think it's strange."

"Hey, you made me tell you. Turn about is fair play, spill."

He caressed her cheek. "All right, I'm thinking that Ron did me the biggest favor that he has ever done for anyone."

She laughed. "After everything we have just done, you are laying here thinking of Ron? Should I be insulted?"

"Weird, I know, but hear me out, Ginny." He sighed. "When I was married...before, everything was pretty much by the book. It was almost like learning how to dance; one, two, three, kiss;" he gave her a chaste kiss on the lips, "one, two, three, touch;" he brushed her breast lightly, "one, two, three, moan."

Ginny giggled.

Harry rolled his eyes. "No, Ginny, I said 'moan.'"

"Oh, sorry, 'Oh Harry'."

He chuckled. "Perfect. Anyway, you get the picture. There wasn't any variation. There was no experimenting. In short Ginevra, there was more variation in this first time between us, than there was in my entire marriage with – her."

Ginny laughed. "You can say her name, you know."

"Don't want too. That makes her real. Right now, that whole incident has been relegated to the realms of a bad dream and that's where I want to keep it."

She ran her hand through his unruly hair. "I sometimes wonder if Ron is happy."

“He made his choices. He chose her over me. It doesn’t matter to me how he feels about it now.”

“Me thinks thou doth protest too much.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“It means, Harry, that you miss him.”

“You’re wrong, Ginny.” Harry got up and grabbed his robe and went out through the French doors and stood looking out at the ocean, letting the breeze caress him.”

Ginny pursed her lips. Then she grabbed her robe and followed him. “Sweetheart, I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to upset you; but I do believe what I said is true. If it wasn’t, then you wouldn’t have reacted like this.”

“Is this going to be how it is, Ginny. Now that we’re married, you are going to make it your mission to get me to forgive Ron?”

“Harry, YOU brought Ron up; and no, that isn’t my mission, as you put it. I am the same person that I was yesterday. Have you ever known me to hold back when something needed to be said?” She hit his arm.

“Ow!”

“And why are you getting so mad anyway?” She went back into the bedroom, took off her robe and threw it, got back into bed and pulled the sheets up and turned on her side away from where Harry would lay.

“Ginny?”

“Go away, Harry!”

“No, I’m not going away. Look at me.”

“No!”

He too threw his robe and got back into bed, and snuggled up to spoon her. He moved her hair out of the way and began kissing her neck.

She moved away from him but he followed and pressed against her again. "This is a big bed, but eventually you are going to run out of room. So you might as well talk to me. Why are we fighting about Ron, of all things, on our wedding night? Don't you think that that is silly?"

"Wrong thing to say, Harry!" She got up again and put her robe back on.

Harry got up with a sigh but didn't bother with a robe. "I think that now you are being mad for mad's sake. Come back to bed." He turned her around and put his arms around her.

When she attempted to get away, she realized that her wiggling against him was having an interesting effect, so stood stock still. "Harry, let me go."

He shook his head slowly. "Nope, ain't gonna happen. We are *not* spending our wedding night at each others throats, so you might as well get that through your head." Then he kissed her.

Ginny stood there not responding at all, eyes open and fuming."

But Harry persisted, finding each of the newly acquired tender spots and exploiting them to his advantage. Soon he was getting moans from her and again he took her lips and this time she responded to him.

"Harry, I'm sor..."

But he put his fingers to her lips. "No love, I'm the one that needs to apologize. I over reacted to the conversation and flew off the handle. But I never want us to fight and use sex as a tool against the other. That's off limits, OK?"

"Is that why you didn't apologize until after I kissed you back?"

“Yes. Look, let’s just agree that Ron is a sore spot and therefore not conversation material during sex. OK?”

“Gottcha, no threesome.”

“Threeso...” Harry looked at Ginny’s twinkling eyes, and shook his head and pulled her closer. I have a feeling that I’m in for big trouble.”

Ginny smiled. “The biggest, Harry Potter!”

Chapter 17 – Parents and In-Laws

“Ginevra Weasley, you open this door this instant!”

Ginny and Harry sat bolt upright in bed and looked at each other in surprise.

“Mum?”

“Yes, open this door!”

Ginny grabbed her robe and flew to the door.

“Wait, Ginny!” Harry also grabbed a robe and wrapped it around himself.

5 foot 6 inches of towering fury, rushed into their bedroom. “What is the meaning of this?” She was brandishing the daily prophet through the air like a weapon.

Harry looked at her. “What is that, mum?”

She spun on Harry and began batting him in the head with the newspaper. “How dare you!”

He quickly ducked and tried to protect his head as she swung the newspaper like a weapon. “How dare I what?”

“She opened up the paper to a headline.

Potter Proposes Perfect Pair

Harry grabbed the paper quickly and read. With a groan, he handed the paper to Ginny.

Her eyes widened. “Oh my. How did they find out? We’re half way around the bloody world for Merlin’s sake.”

“Watch your mouth, young lady. How can you two do this to me?”

Harry looked up and saw Arthur standing in the doorway. Harry walked over to him.

“Congratulations, Harry.”

“Thank you, dad; maybe we should leave the two of them alone.”

“Absolutely not, something you need to learn right away son, let Molly have her say, get it over with and then move on.”

Harry wasn't sure about that advice but shrugged. “Ahh, OK.” He went over and slid his arm around Ginny. When Molly took a breath, Harry kissed her on the forehead. “Can I explain why we did what we did, mum?”

Molly stood there with her hands attached firmly to her hips. “Well, I'd like to hear this.”

“There are several reasons really. The first was to avoid this...” He picked up the paper she had been hitting him with. “...Harry Potter gets married. Who needs it? We just wanted a quiet wedding with no reporters and the like. The second reason is very much more – personal.”

Ginny turned red, surprisingly so did Harry. He looked at Arthur then plunged on. “I wanted to be with her.”

“And I with him,” Ginny interjected. “We wanted to do things in the right order.”

“Harry smiled down at Ginny. “I respect Ginny too much to treat her any differently. When I married – before, we did things backwards. One thing I know about myself is that I can be taught. I didn't want to mess things up between us. Do you understand, mum?”

She looked from Harry, to her daughter and sighed. She cupped his cheek in her hand, “You are a good boy, Harry. And Merlin help me, I can never stay mad at you.”

“No mum, he's a good man.”

Molly suddenly looked embarrassed and flustered. “Well, I'll just let you two, um, get dressed. We'll just wait, ah, downstairs.”

Harry smiled. "It's good to see you both."

Arthur led her out of the room. Ginny giggled. "Well, I guess the cat is out of the bag."

Harry laughed. "Gosh, ya think? Oh and..." He leaned over and kissed her. "...Good morning, Mrs. Potter."

She put her arms around his neck. "Good morning, sweetheart. I don't suppose we could..."

"Absolutely not Ginevra Potter, your mother is already mortified."

"Serves her right, barging in like that."

"Right, why don't *you* go tell her that. I'll just stay meekly in the back ground."

"Harry Potter, you can't tell me that you are afraid of my mum! You defeated Voldemort."

"Voldemort is one thing, your mum is entirely another. She scares me to death sometimes." With a laugh, he pushed her toward the bathroom.

When they made it downstairs, Molly and Arthur were talking to Miki. When their little boy saw them, his face was bright with excitement. "Mum, Daddy, I have a grandma and grandpa! Are they mine; really?"

"Of course they are Miki, this is mum's mum and dad." Then Harry said in a stage whisper, "You better be careful around her Mik, she makes you eat all of your vege's." He looked at Molly and dodged the newspaper once again.

Laughing, he kissed her on the cheek. "Just teasing, mum."

Draco came into the kitchen and laughed at Harry. "I see that your mother-in-law found you."

"Yeah, when did you guys get back?"

"About five minutes before the troops arrived."

Ginny kissed her mum and dad. "All right, mum and dad, have a seat. What would you like for breakfast?"

"Absolutely not, Ginevra, I will make breakfast this morning."

"Mum!" Ginny rolled her eyes. "This is my home; it's my turn to take care of you. Harry, what would you like?"

"Hot cakes, love"

"Coming up."

Harry got up and made a pot of coffee. As he worked side by side with Ginny, he glanced at her out of the side of his eyes and tried very hard to keep from laughing.

Ginny snickered.

Draco picked up Mrs. Weasley's copy of the Prophet and opened it up to the front page. His eyes bulged. "Ahh, Harry, do you know that you got married yesterday?"

Harry turned and looked at him, and snorted. "So I've been told."

Molly narrowed her eyes, I should have used something more significant than a newspaper to beat you with, Harry Potter."

Harry smiled and leaned over and kissed her on the cheek. "I love you too, mum."

He sat next to her as he waited for the coffee to brew. "We thought that we would come home in a little while and have a proper wedding; so that you didn't miss out. We can do the whole reception thing with the works; but we really just wanted a quiet little wedding with no attention brought to us." He indicated the paper in Draco's hand. "But we couldn't even get that!"

"All right, all right, I forgive you."

“Thanks mum,” he looked from Arthur to Molly. “Now that you are here, how long can you stay? I’d love to show you both around the Island.”

“I’m sorry, Harry, but we can’t stay this time. Arthur has to be at the Ministry first thing tomorrow.”

Ginny frowned. “Oh, mum, are you sure?”

“I’m sorry darling; but we’ll come back.”

Chapter 18 – Saw Man

Two days later Miki came home from school and ran through the house to find Ginny, “Mum, mum?”

He saw Tavish, “Hello Tavish, do you know where mum is?”

“Aye laddie, she be in th’ bedroom.”

“Thank you, sir.”

He ran to the bedroom and opened the door. “Hi, mum.”

Ginny turned around. “Hello, baby, how was school today?”

“It was good, I guess. Teacher says give you a note.” He handed her an envelope and got up on her bed and started bouncing. “Look at me mum, I’m flyin’.”

Ginny was reading the teacher’s note as she answered him. “That’s nice, dear.” Once she finished the note, she turned to Miki. “Mikeal, lets go have some milk and biscuits.”

“OK, mum.” He made a final jump and landed on the floor, and ran down to the kitchen. Ginny poured the milk and put sweets on a plate.

“So, Miki, how did school go today?”

“It was OK, mum. Robert spilled his paint on the floor. Then Tommy stepped in it and made footprints on the carpet. Teacher gave us graham crackers, and I jumped off the swing three times before Mrs. Nihona said don’t do that any more. I like jumpin’ off the swing, it makes me feel like I’m flyin’.”

“OK, and what happened during quiet time? Were you talking to someone?”

“Oh, yeah, I was talkin’ to Wolf.”

“Who is wolf dear?”

“He says he’s my guide.”

“Guide for what, darling?”

Miki shrugged his shoulders, I don’ know, but he tells me things that are gonna happen, before they happen.”

“I see. Have you been talking to this guide long?”

He shrugged his shoulder. “I don’t know, mum. He says I am a saw man.”

Ginny looked confused. “A saw man, Miki?”

“Uh huh, can I go play, mum?”

“Of course, baby. Mind that you put your toys away when you are done.”

“OK, mum.” He ran out of the kitchen and up the steps to his room.

Ginny sat in troubled silence. Draco and Moira came into the kitchen. “Hey Gin, I’m heading to the Home, can you make sure that this idiot gets fed tonight?”

“Hey, now that wasn’t nice Rara”

She rolled her eyes and Ginny laughed. “Please, Dray, I asked you not to call me that.”

He put his arms around her and nuzzled her neck. “Oh all right, no more ‘Rara’, but you have to admit, it’s cute.”

She looked at him in disgust, then kissed him. “No. It’s not! Ginny, please feed him so that he doesn’t burn the kitchen down. He’s hopeless you know.”

Now it was Draco’s turn to be disgusted. “Hey, please note that I am still here.”

She kissed him. “Yes you are, Dray; and I don’t want you cooking. I’ll see you later.”

Draco called after her. “I’m not that bad you know! “

Ginny patted his shoulder. "Yes you are, Draco, you are every bit as bad as she says, do you remember the macaroni and cheese debacle? But that doesn't mean that we don't love you anyway."

"Nice, Potter. When are we going to get house elves anyway?"

"When we don't have Muggles coming by on a regular basis; in other words, never."

"Harumph."

"So, what would you like tonight?"

"Filet Mignon, twice baked potatoes, baby carrots, early peas and onions in a light cream sauce, homemade croissants and a nice German Chocolate cake for desert."

Ginny looked at him with a smirk. "Right, macaroni and cheese and hamburgers it is."

Draco smiled. "Will the macaroni have little seasoned croutons on top?"

She grinned. "Yes and that really melty cheese that you like."

"OK, scrap the filet. Is the cake still a possibility though?"

"I'll see what I can do."

Ginny pulled the letter out of her pocket and handed it to Draco. "Hey, read this and tell me what you think."

Draco read the teachers note and frowned. "Did you ask Miki about it?"

"Yes, and that is where it gets stranger. He told me that he has a wolf as a guide. This wolf tells him things about the future." Then Ginny looked very confused. "He also said that wolf calls him a saw man."

"Saw man?" Draco thought for a moment. "Does he mean a Shaman?"

"A Shaman? That fits. I never thought of that. I wasn't sure what he was talking about." She threw up her hands. "Well, my knowledge of magic falls short at Shamanism. How about you Dray, do you know anything?"

"Sorry, Gin. When is Harry getting home?"

"Any time now."

"Well, let's talk to him about it when he gets home."

She just shook her head. "Well, it's never boring around here." She stood up. "I suppose that if you are going to get your German Chocolate Cake, I had better get a move on."

About a half- hour later, Harry came into the kitchen holding Miki high over his head. Miki had his arms spread wide and his legs straight out behind him. "Mum, I'm flying," he giggled.

"Look what I found sitting on the steps waiting for me, mum. Can I keep him? Please, please, please."

Ginny giggled and kissed Harry. "Only if you take care of it and feed it every day."

Harry brought him down to the ground and set him on the floor, but Miki picked his feet up and giggled.

Harry started wiggling his arms. "Eeeeeeeewwwwwweeeeeeee, it's stuck, mum, get it off, get it off, get it off."

Ginny laughed. "Miki go wash up for dinner, it's almost ready." She watched their son run from the kitchen and she leaned in and kissed Harry. "How'd it go today, sweetheart?"

"Great!" Harry looked at Draco. "Nina said her first words today."

Draco's head shot up from the paper he was reading. "Oh yeah? And – um – what did she say?"

Harry went and bent over the back of Draco's chair and said, "Da, Da, Da. She's looking for you Draco."

He didn't say anything for a while, then he growled at Harry. "That would have been her first words whether I spent time with her or not!"

"Suit yourself, Dray, but I say she's looking for her daddy."

Draco bolted up and glared at Harry. "Sod off, Potter." He threw the newspaper down on the table and stormed from the kitchen.

Harry's brow's furrowed, and looked at Ginny with his mouth open. "What's with him?"

Ginny looked as shocked as he did. "I couldn't say, Harry. I guess it's just a day for weird behavior."

Harry shook his head. "OK, then. That was odd." Then he went to Ginny. "How was your day, love?"

She kissed him. "It was very interesting. Here, read this." She handed him the teachers note. He sat at the table and furrowed his brow. When he finished, he looked up at Ginny.

"Oh, there's more. When I talked to him about the letter, he told me about wolf. He is his guide, and he told him that he was a saw man."

"Wait, a what?"

"Saw man. Draco thinks he means Shaman."

"And he sees this creature?"

"Yes, he does. He says that wolf talks to him and explains things to him, and tells him things before they happen."

Harry leaned back in his chair and ran a hand through his hair. "He's a seer? OK, then." He thought for a minute then looked up at his wife. "How soon 'till dinner?"

"Five minutes."

“OK, after dinner, I’ll take him out flying and we’ll have a talk. I think that I should probably talk to Albus. If there is anyone who will understand this, it will be him.”

Miki came running in and showed Ginny his hands. “Perfect Mik, OK, go find uncle Dray and we will eat.”

He watched the boy run out of the kitchen again and he looked at Ginny. “You sure that Draco isn’t going to bite his head off too?”

“Right now, I’m not sure of anything. Draco’s acting weird and Miki is talking to spirits.” She shook her head. “It’s never dull around here.”

“Well, let’s see if I can make it even more interesting.” Harry cupped his hands together and again a rose started to appear between them. He handed it to her when he was finished, but almost immediately the petals disintegrated into a fine powder that floated to the floor. Harry frowned.

Ginny giggled. “Harry, you make beautiful stems. I’ll cherish them always.”

Harry just shook his head. “I don’t know what I keep doing wrong.”

Miki came back with a frown on his face. “Uncle Dray says he’s not hungry, he’ll eat later. I think that he was cryin’ daddy.”

Harry scooped the boy up. “Well, daddy will talk to him later, OK? In the mean time, mum has dinner ready. Afterwards, you and I are going to go flying.”

He stood up in the chair and started jumping up and down. “Yea, yea, yea.”

“I’ll take that to mean that you would like to go.”

Ginny frowned. “Miki, sit down before you fall, baby.”

After dinner, the boys helped Ginny clean up, then left to go flying. They flew through the trees and hovered in the palms and frightened a flock of tropical birds into flight. After they watched them fly off, with

a joyful laugh, the two slowly landed to sit under what was now their tree.

Miki sat between Harry's legs and leaned against his chest. "So mate, tell me about your day today."

"Do you want to know about my guide, daddy?"

Harry laughed. "Well, yes, as a matter of fact, I do."

Miki nodded knowingly. "Wolf said that you would and that I should tell you and mum everything you want to know."

Harry thought for a minute. "OK, how long have you known about wolf?"

"Since I was very little; before you were my daddy; before mommy and dad died and I went to live with Mrs. Lee. But he would just sit with me. I couldn't talk yet."

Harry stared at his son in amazement. "You can remember before you could talk?"

Miki looked at his father with confusion written all over his face. "Daddy, I remember when I was borned."

Harry was quiet for a while. "Can you tell me what you remember?"

"Mostly being hugged real tight, then bright lights." He was playing with blades of grass as he spoke. "Then there was something wet and warm and then mommy was holding me."

"Wolf came and laid in my bed with me and kept me quiet when mommy was sleeping."

Harry smiled and shook his head in amazement. "Well, son, that's very interesting. What else can you tell me?"

"I knew before my mommy and dad died. Wolf told me that it would be all right; and when you came to work at my house, wolf told me that you were gonna take me home with you and take good care of

me. I dinnent wanna go, daddy. It scared me. Wolf told me that you were nice, but I dinnent wanna leave my friends, or Mrs. Lee. When you said I could stay with Mrs. Lee, I felt better.”

“Does wolf tell you things all the time or just sometimes?”

“Just sometimes; mostly when it’s ‘portant. Sometimes I think they aren’t right.”

“Well son, you have to use your own judgment, but sometimes people or in this case spirit guides may have a little more wisdom than you do.”

“So, how can you tell, daddy?”

“It’s not always easy, but you know you can come to mum or me if you have questions about anything. “

Miki and Harry sat quietly for a long time, then Miki turned around in his daddy’s lap and put his hand on his cheeks. “Daddy, don’t go in the cave! There’s bad people there.”

Harry was confused at the abrupt change in subject. “What cave, mate?”

He shrugged his shoulders. “I don’t know, daddy. That’s all he said.”

“All right, son, I’ll stay out of caves.” Harry laughed. Well, it’s getting late. I think we should head back now.”

Miki jumped up. “OK, you gonna talk to Uncle Dray, daddy?”

“Well, I’m going to *try* to talk to Uncle Dray. Sometimes he doesn’t want to talk. I wouldn’t worry about it though, mate. He’ll be fine.”

They returned to the castle and Ginny took Mikeal to get him a bath and Harry went in search of Draco.

He found him sitting on his balcony staring out at the ocean. He knocked on the doorframe. “Dray, can I come out?”

Draco didn’t say anything but waved a hand toward an empty seat.

The two sat for a long time in silence before Harry turned to him. "I'm sorry, Draco. I'm not sure what the problem is with Nina, but..."

"There's no problem with Nina, Harry. It's with me. I want..." He sighed. "No, I crave to bring that baby home and keep her forever. I want to watch her grow up and teach her how to fly a broom. I want to send her to Hogwarts to learn magic. I want to hate her boyfriends and threaten to kill them. I want to walk her down the aisle when she gets married. I want all of those things – but I can't have them."

"But why, Dray?"

He looked at Harry, then back out at the ocean, "Because I am a wizard, Nina is a Muggle. It wouldn't work. Besides, can you imagine having me as a father?"

Harry laughed lightly. "Well, I think that Moira would counter that part of it. As far as the wizard/Muggle thing, what family has it perfect? I know Gin and I don't exactly have the market cornered in that respect. Heck, we have a shaman on our hands. What the heck can a shaman do? I'm at a loss."

Harry leaned forward with his elbows on his knees, and looked intently at his friend. "I can't tell you what to do, Draco; and I also can't say that I understand your reluctance. I can tell you that being a father is the second greatest feeling in the world. The greatest is having a woman who looks past all of your faults and loves you anyway.

Then he sighed heavily. "I will make you a promise, Dray. I know that this is a sore spot for you, so I won't mention it again, but – well – just think about it."

"Believe me, I have. There is just no way right now."

Harry just nodded and sighed, then stood to leave.

"Harry."

"Yeah?"

“Thanks.”

Harry smirked. “I can’t believe you, Draco.”

“Harry, you promised.”

“No, no. no. I’m talking about you passing on the macaroni and cheese. It even had the seasoned croutons that you like! I think that Ginny might have some left if you want some.

Draco stood and followed Harry off the balcony. “I must say that you certainly know about the important things in life.”

Chapter 19 – Roses and Plane trips

Ginny lay in bed with her head on Harry's chest. "What are you thinking about, Harry?"

Harry held her tightly but was a million miles away. "Hmm?" Harry sighed. "Oh, that our little boy is not so little, even though he is only five. His Spirit Guide is teaching him. I don't want to loose him, Gin. He is still such a baby, but..."

Ginny's hand cupped Harry's cheek. "Sweetheart, he will always be our baby. We won't loose him because he is brilliant. We won't loose him because he has special powers. We simply won't loose him because he is our son and we love him."

"I guess I'm just frightened for him. I don't understand what he is going through, or what is expected of him."

Ginny smiled and gave his ribs a squeeze causing him to jump slightly. "It sounds to me like you are a daddy."

Harry huffed. "I suppose I am." Harry turned on his side and faced her. "You know what else I am?"

Ginny's eyes sparkled. "Why don't you tell me?"

"I am a husband who just happens to be able to make roses." He waggled his eyebrows at her and gave her an impish smile. He sat up and once again attempted to produce a rose. This time the stem appeared without petals at all. Harry frowned.

Ginny leaned in and kissed him and took the stem, got up and put it in a crystal vase on the dresser.

"Why are you saving all of my failed attempts?"

"Because every time I look at them, it reminds me of how much you love me."

Harry chuckled. "I do, you know."

She smiled impishly at him and straddled his hips and caressed his chest. "Why don't you prove it, Mr. Potter."

"My pleasure, Mrs. Potter."

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Two days later, Harry, Ginny and Miki were flying from Honolulu to New York. Their destination...Ottery St. Catchpole and the Burrow. Ginny made sure to bring lots of toys and books for Miki, but the child couldn't contain his excitement at being on an airplane. He was looking out the window, his face alight with pleasure.

He looked at Harry and whispered, "Daddy, this is different than flying a broom."

Harry smiled. "Which do you like better, mate?"

The two boys looked at each other and started laughing, and at the same time said, "broom!"

It was only when the seatbelt sign came on and the pilot announced that they would be hitting some turbulence that Ginny made Miki sit in his seat.

By the time they landed in New York, Ginny was never so glad to see ground in her life. Harry heard her mumble something that sounded like, "Muggle contraptions!"

He wrapped an arm around her and kissed her temple. "You OK?"

"NO!"

"You mad at me?"

"Yes!"

Harry chuckled. "You gonna pout all day?"

"Yes!"

"Oh, OK. Just so I know. Miki and I will just stay out of your way."

“Oh you don’t have to worry about Miki.” She looked at him but couldn’t hide the twinkle in her eyes.

Harry leaned over and whispered in her ear. “Maybe I can do something to make it better.”

She giggled. “Right here in front of everyone? Harry Potter, I’m surprised at you.”

Harry looked around the plane at the passengers gathering their belongings and making their way up the isles. “Well, we could Obliviate them afterwards.”

Ginny didn’t say anything, just hit him and began gathering their things as well.

“I’ll take that as a no then. Ahh well, so much for adventure.” Then he ducked as Ginny swung a hand at him, again.

“HA, you missed!” Then he stood straight and smacked his head on the over-head compartment. “Ow!”

Ginny laughed and rubbed his head. “Serves you right. Come on, let’s get out of here.”

Miki however was full of concern for him. “Daddy, you OK?”

“Yeah, mate, I’m fine...” He laughed. “...as long as your mum stops abusing me, that is.”

Ginny stuck her tongue out at him and Harry laughed. “Such a good example for your five year old.”

They took a taxi to the same office in which they had turned Lucius over. There they ran into Tad Mihelcic. “Mr. Potter, Ms. Weasley, it is a pleasure to see you both again.”

Harry shook his hand. “Harry, call me Harry. He indicated Ginny. “And Ms. Weasley is now Mrs. Potter.” He picked up Miki and smiled and this little guy is our son, Mikeal. Miki, can you say hello to Mr. Mihelcic?”

He put his head on Harry's shoulder and put a finger in his mouth.
"Hello."

"He is just a bit tired; we've been traveling all day."

"Still living in Hawaii I take it."

"Yes, we aren't likely to leave. We love it there. Right now we are heading home though. Is there some sort of wizarding transportation that is available here?"

"Yes, the S. O. S. The Sorcerer's Overland Streamer. It's the only way to go...over land that is. Take it to the docks, and then take the W. E. T. That's the Wizarding Emergency Transport. It will get you back quick as you please."

"Thank you, Tad."

"Are going to see Davis while you are visiting, Harry?"

Harry and Ginny laughed, and Harry shook his head. "Not if I can avoid it. Davis wants to recruit me every time he sees me. The man never gives me a moment's peace."

Tad laughed. "Yes, the man is nefarious. But he knows quality when he sees it. If I thought for one moment that I could talk you into..." But he looked at Harry's face. "Well, I guess not. In any case, if you see Davis, give him my regards."

"I'll do that."

"Well, I'm on my way to a meeting. Congratulations to both of you."

"Thank you, Tad." Harry and Ginny watched him leave, and Harry shook his head. If the S.O.S. and W.E.T. are anything like the Knight Bus, we better get a room and start fresh in the morning."

"I'm all for that. Miki's tuckered out; and I could use a nice long soak in a hot tub." She smoothed the hair away from her son's face. "You ready for a nap, sweetheart?"

He nodded his head and gave her a big yawn.

They went out to the street and hailed a cab. "Take us to a nice hotel, if you please."

The taxi driver darted out into the traffic and wove in and out at impossible speeds, causing both Ginny and Harry to be thrown back and forth against the sides of the car despite the seat belts. Miki sat between them, eyes wide, looking from Ginny to Harry in question.

Before long the taxi pulled up in front of the New York Hiatt Regency, waited impatiently as Harry pulled out Muggle currency to pay him and then sped off.

Ginny was white as a sheet. "That man is a maniac. No question about it; maniac, pure and simple."

Harry put a protective arm around his wife and held Miki in his arms. "I have to admit that that was worse than the Knight Bus ever dreamed of being." He sighed. "Let's go in and get this little guy some sleep."

They approached the front desk, and Harry smiled. "Hello, sir, I need a room for my family."

The man took in the disheveled look of the people in front of him and looked down his nose at Harry.

"I doubt sir, that you would be able to afford one of our rooms here at the Hiatt Regency."

Harry looked at Ginny. "I just love New York!" Then he looked back at the smug man standing there. "Look, chap; give me a room with a hot tub. In fact, give me a suite! I'm tired, I'm hungry, I've been beat around in the back of every kind of transport you can imagine. My wife and son need to rest before we continue our trip over seas. Now if you would be so kind as to get that smug nose of yours out of the air long enough to give me a key, I would appreciate it." Harry's voice was getting louder as he spoke and attracted the attention of the hotel manager.

“Is there a problem here?”

Harry was so angry by this time that he was ready to spit. “You bet there’s a problem. I need a room and this blighter won’t help me out.”

“Well look at them sir, they look as if they are practically homeless.”

“Bennent, you are relieved.” He turned to Harry. “I do apologize, sir. Please, let me make this misunderstanding up to you.”

Harry shook his head. “That’s not necessary, sir. I just need a suite.” Harry handed him his credit card and was soon being shown to a suite of rooms that was absolutely beautiful.

He went through a door and laid Miki down and took off his shoes and covered him up. He kissed his head, and Miki sighed and turned over and he was asleep before Harry left the room.

Harry leaned in the doorway, with his arms folded and watched Ginny with a smile. “I love you, you know!”

She spun around and smiled. “I love you, too. This room is fabulous. I could stand to stay here for a while.”

“What, and deny your mum her wedding reception? You really do have a death wish for me don’t you?”

Chapter 20 – The S.O.S., W.E.T. and Rita Skeeter

The following morning they left the hotel and summoned the S. O. S. and went to the dock, where they in turn summoned the W. E. T.

The Wizarding Emergency Transport was nothing like they had ever seen before. It hovered over the water as if it floated on a pocket of air. The bottom was pristine white and graduated through the spectrum of colors, one blending into the other, until the top ended in a dark purple.

When it appeared, the gang plank unrolled, like a carpet and attached itself to the dock then, became a solid piece that sprouted hand railings.

A familiar figure strolled down the plank and stopped in front of them. Harry smiled, “Stan Shunpike! What are you doing here? Aren’t you working the Knight Bus anymore?”

The man looked up and stared at Harry. “Naw, Stan’s me brother. Twin brother actually. I’m Maurice Shunpike, and I’ll be yer conductor today. Welcome to the Wizarding Emergency Transport, overseas transport for witches and wizards. What ere yer destination; no matter where ye roam; the W. E. T. can take you; over sea and foam.”

Harry chuckled quietly. “Thank you, Maurice.”

The conductor waved an arm indicating the gangplank. “Well, get on board. We don’ need the grass ta grow under our feet now do we?”

Harry picked up Mikeal and followed Ginny up the ramp.

Once inside, Maurice turned to Harry. “That’ll be 15 galleons fer the three ‘o ya. That includes a meal. An extra three sickles ya can have a pillow an’ blanket fer each o’ ya.”

Harry passed over the coins and they found seats. He put Ginny against the window and moved Miki between them. He only had time to say, “Brace yourself,” before the ship took off. Within moments, the ship shuttered and began to move. Then they were off like a shot through the busy shipping lanes; weaving in and out and dodging

Muggle ships and tugs, slipping through impossibly narrow passageways, at speeds that would rival anything a Muggle could come up with.

Harry noticed an old wizard toward the back of the Transport, and a very elegantly dressed witch towards the middle. She nodded to him and he returned the gesture.

Before long the chaotic ride smoothed out into something a bit less riotous and swerved only when happening upon an occasional whale, or to pick up another passenger.

Harry reached over and rubbed Ginny's shoulder and smiled. "You OK?"

She raised an eyebrow. "What do you think?"

Harry frowned. "Oh." Then he smiled again. "Wanna make up?"

Ginny rolled her eyes but couldn't hide the twinkle in them. "What do you think? You, Mr. Potter, have a one track mind."

He stretched out his legs and put his hands behind his head and closed his eyes with a smile. "Oh but what a track to be on, don't you think?"

"Daddy this is fun. Can I look out the window?"

"Sure mate. Why don't you take the seat in front of us? I'll just scoot over closer to mum."

This time Mikeal rolled his eyes. "Geez, daddy!"

Harry started laughing. "Hey, when did you get an attitude?"

Harry put an arm around Ginny and nuzzled her neck.

"Harry, behave yourself."

He kissed her cheek then chuckled and took his arm from around her and took her hand instead. "I am behaving; I'm behaving just like me."

Before long, Maurice fed them their meal. It looked like a mix between Steak and Kidney pie and creamed chipped beef. Ginny looked at it in disgust. "They have got to be kidding!" She pushed it away with a shudder.

Harry however took it in stride. Miki took one look at the mess in front of him and looked at his mum, "Do I hafta eat this, mum?"

"No, baby. I think I have some crackers in my purse." She started looking for the mentioned items and looked at her husband and laughed. He finished the plate and pushed it away.

"Well, how was it?"

"He looked back at her with a look of utter ecstasy on his face. "Bloody awful! As soon as we get into Falmouth, I am getting us the best meal money can buy!"

Miki jumped up. "McDonalds!"

Both parents cringed. "Ahh, no!"

Four hours later the W. E. T. pulled into Falmouth, much to their relief, and deposited them on a little used jetty in the middle of nowhere. Maurice walked them down the gangplank.

"You gonna take the Knight Bus?"

"Well, we thought we would..."

But Maurice cut him off and raised his wand hand. Instantly, the violently purple bus appeared before them. "Welcome to the Knight Bus, emergency transport for the stranded witch or wizard..."

"Hullo, Stan."

Stan Shunpike looked up. "Maurice, 's good ta see ya, mate!"

"Got some passengers here fer ya."

"As I live an' breathe, it's 'Arry Potter; an who are these two?"

Harry smiled. "Stan, meet my wife Ginny and my son Miki."

"My, fings do change don' 'ey?"

Harry looked at Ginny. "The Burrow?"

"Yes, I think that would be best."

"OK, Stan, The Burrow, in Ottery St. Catchpole. Do you know where it is?"

"Do we know... 'Arry, we know where everyfing is don' we Ern? The Weasley place, right?"

"That's it."

"Righty o, 'Arry."

Maurice unloaded their bags and Stan loaded them on to the bus. When Harry paid the fare and they took their seats, Stan pounded on the wall. "Take it away, Ern."

It took only thirty minutes of jostling back and forth before the bus was pulling down the gravel road toward the Weasley home.

They got their luggage and Harry shrunk it down and slipped it into his pocket. Miki was already walking up the drive looking at everything, then he ran back, excitement showing in his eyes, Mum, this is a neat house."

Ginny looked up fondly at the oddly shaped building. "Yes it is, baby. C'mon, let's go see grandma and grandpa."

With a bang, the bus disappeared.

They never made it to the house before Molly Weasley came out of the house wiping her hands on her apron.

"Grandma!" Miki made a beeline to the older woman who scooped him up and kissed him soundly.

“Mikeal, you have gotten so big. My goodness, pretty soon you’re going to be taller than your daddy is. Oh it is good to see you again, Miki.”

She put Miki down and threw her arms around Ginny. “I am so glad you are home, baby.” She looked at Harry with a smile but he took a step back.

He gestured to her hands. “You don’t – ahh – have a newspaper hidden there somewhere, do you?”

She playfully slapped his arm. “Oh you.”

He hugged and kissed her. “Hullo, mum. You are looking well.”

She clapped her hands together. “Well, let’s not stand out here. Come on inside.”

The next few days were a whirlwind of activity. The wedding reception was in two days and Molly had the entire family running errands to get ready.

The reception was in a hall of the old church in town. Harry had decided that he was just going to stand back and let Molly tell him where she wanted him; which turned out to be a good strategy. Harry felt as if he were lost in the shuffle of decorations, food, and people, and was immensely glad that they had gotten married before and didn’t have to deal with that mess as well.

Harry saw Ginny and grabbed her hand without a word and pulled her up the stairs and into the chapel. He found a pew and pulled Ginny in after him. “I thought you could use a break. This is crazy.”

Ginny smiled at him and squeezed his hand and leaned against him. “I am so glad we got married before all of this. I can’t believe this. This is nuts, even for mum.

The two sat for a while in the quiet of the chapel. The sun streamed through the stained glass windows making colored patterns on the pews and floor and Harry lost himself in the beauty of the old church.

It seemed like moments later that they were being nudged awake. Ginny lifted her head and looked around into the smiling face of her brother George.

“So, this is where you are hiding. Mum is looking for you.”

Harry looked at Fred on the other side of him. “Hey Fred, how are you doing?”

“Not as good as you, Harry. How’d you manage to get away?”

“Here you lot are.” Bill walked in. Mum is getting frantic.

George grinned. “We’re hiding! Come join us, Bill.”

“Don’t mind if I do.” He sat down on the hard pew with a sigh. “I’m glad we only have one girl in the family. I don’t think we had this much when I married Fleur.”

“What can I say, mum loves me more than any of you blokes.” Ginny teased with a twinkle in her eye.

They all laughed. “I think I’m glad.” George intoned.

Charlie walked in and smiled. “Ahh – I thought I’d find you all here.”

Harry started laughing. “You know, your mum isn’t stupid. Eventually she is going to come looking for all of us.”

“So theeze is where zee party is.” The group turned as one to a very pregnant Fleur.

Bill nudged the line in the pew. “Budge up there you lot. Make room for the newest Weasley.” Bill directed his wife to the seat and she sighed in relief and shook her head. “Ginny, you better only do theeze once!”

Ginny looked at Harry and put her head on his shoulder. “You’ve got a deal, Fleur.”

Percy and Arthur walked in. “We’re under strict orders to drag the lot of you back downstairs. Mother is fit to be tied.”

Ginny laughed. "Have a seat dad, Percy. We're on strike!"

Percy sighed with relief. "Don't mind if I do."

Ten minutes later, Mrs. Weasley stood in the doorway of the chapel with her hands on her hips. "What do you all think you are doing?"

Arthur stood and took her hand. "Having a break, Molly dear. Come sit down."

"But – well, maybe for just a minute." She sighed with relief.

"You know mum, all of this is not necessary." Ginny said.

"Of course it is, Ginny. You only get married once after all."

From the back of the chapel came a shrill voice. "Well, hello there, Harry."

Everyone but Harry turned around to look at the newcomer.

"Harry, over here. Harry Potter!"

The group groaned and Harry shook his head. "Rita Skeeter! What in Merlin's name is she doing here?"

Ginny giggled. "Well the famous Harry Potter is getting married. Where else would she be?"

Harry sneaked a peek over his shoulder then leaned over to Ginny. "Do you think we can slip out un-noticed?"

She caressed his arm and giggled. "I think it's too late for that, love."

"Harry!"

Fred leaned over, and in his best falsetto voice repeated, "Oh, Harry. Over here, Harry."

Rita frowned at Fred as she approached and mumbled under her breath. "Peasant!"

Fred and George returned the favor. "Hack!"

Bill, Charlie, Fred and George surrounded Harry and Ginny, protecting them from the nosy reporter.

Ginny leaned over to Harry. "You know sweetheart, Ron and Hermione will be here today."

Harry frowned and looked at the reporter with a sigh. "It's alright blokes. I'll talk to her."

The family slowly walked away leaving Harry and Ginny alone with the obnoxious woman.

Rita sat in the pew next to Harry. "Now then, Harry. When did you..."

But Harry held up a hand. "Not so fast, Rita."

"Oh but, Harry, you and I go way back. You are going to give me an exclusive aren't you?"

"Well Rita, I just might..." He watched her smile grow, but he held up a hand, "...IF, and this is a big 'if' Rita, IF you behave yourself and leave all of the guests alone during the reception."

"Oh but, Harry..."

Harry shook his head. "Take it or leave it, Rita. I'll give you thirty minutes all by your little lonesome. And guess what Rita, I have wedding pictures." Harry's voice was sing-songy.

Rita seemed to consider the offer for a moment, then smiled. "All right Harry. When will you give me the thirty minutes?"

"After the reception tonight."

"Can I come to the reception?"

"No. I don't trust you to keep your word. I'll meet you here after the reception is over."

"And will your wife be there too?"

Harry looked at Ginny who rolled her eyes then nodded. "Yes, Ginny will be there too."

"Deal. And you will have the pictures with you?"

"Yes, I'll bring pictures with me.

"And you will let me take some more pictures?"

Again, Harry looked at Ginny. "A few wouldn't hurt, I guess."

"Alright Rita, I will also give your photographer ten minutes, as long as you keep your end of the bargain. If I hear that you are bothering the guests, all bets are off."

"Is your ex-wife included in that?"

"Especially, my ex-wife. Now go. I would like some quiet time before the guests start arriving."

"Oh, all right. I'll see you later then." Rita wiggled her fingers at the two of them and left the church.

Ginny leaned against Harry. "Do you trust her?"

"Not in the least; but it's a start. The main goal is to keep her away from Ron and Hermione."

"Well, at least Hermione. Ron wouldn't talk to her, and I don't think that he would let Hermione talk to Rita either."

"I don't trust Ron, and that bi...witch doesn't let anyone tell her anything."

"I know you don't trust Ron, but I do." Ginny looked fondly at her husband. "Harry, you do realize that Ron regrets everything that happened, don't you?"

Harry looked at Ginny for a long moment, then sighed. "Gin, my first reaction to that is to deny it vehemently; but I suppose if I were to be completely honest, I'm sure he probably does. That doesn't change how I feel about him or the situation. We all have regrets. He can live

with his.” Then a devilish glint appeared in Harry’s eyes. “But I will say that he did me a tremendous favor though. I would never have known what I missed.” He kissed her neck just behind her ear. “Let’s get out of here for a while. The Burrow is empty...” He let the statement and its implications hang as he looked at her.

Ginny smiled. “OK, let’s go. Wait, where’s Miki?”

“Downstairs with Uncle George, probably up to his ears in Wizard Weezes by now.”

“I’ll go down and tell mum we are leaving. I’ll be right back.”

Harry watched her leave and sat down again. Moments later he heard footsteps slowly approaching. With a smile he turned but the smile dropped from his face when he saw whom the visitor was.

“Hermione. What are you doing here?”

“Well, I just wanted to talk to you a minute, without all the Weasley’s around. May I sit down?”

He turned back around. “If you must.”

She looked at her hands for a moment. “Harry, I handled things very badly before.”

He huffed. “Ya think?”

She ignored his sarcasm and continued. “I always have loved you, still do as a matter of fact. But I realized that I wasn’t *in* love with you. That, coupled with the fact that you were never there, kind of pushed me into handling things differently than I should have.”

“Hermione, may I remind you that you are the one that pushed me to become an Auror? I wanted to play Quidditch. I believe your exact words were, ‘Harry, just because Voldemort is gone, doesn’t mean that you aren’t needed.’ Merlin, Hermione, I did everything in my power to make you happy. But I came to realize that you are just basically an unhappy person, and there was nothing that I was going

to be able to do to change that. I just hope you treat Ron better than you treated me.”

Hermione looked angry. “You know Harry. You’ve gotten bitter.”

“And I have no reason to be bitter, right!”

“You certainly jumped into the first bed you found, didn’t you.”

Harry started laughing. “Will you listen to yourself?” Harry stood and left the pew he was sitting in. He saw Ginny standing in the doorway listening to the conversation and he smiled at her and waved her over.

She came to his side and put an arm around his waist. “Ready to go, love?”

“Yeah, I think I’m completely finished here.”

Hermione narrowed her eyes at Ginny when she entered. “Well, you’ve finally gotten what you’ve always wanted haven’t you Ginny?” The sarcasm literally dripped from her voice.

Ginny looked at her. “As a matter of fact Hermione, I have *who* I always wanted. Harry is the most wonderful husband a girl could ask for, and you threw him away. Couldn’t you just die!” She added that last bit just to drive the spur a bit deeper.

Hermione’s glare was feral. “At least I’m not his sloppy second!”

Harry held Ginny back. “Don’t rise to the bait, Gin.” He put an arm tightly around his wife and the couple started to walk out but Harry stopped. “Wait a minute.” He turned to his ex-wife. “You knew that Ginny wanted me?”

She rolled her eyes. “Of course I knew. Everyone knew, Harry.”

Harry just shook his head. “Everyone but me.” He looked at Ginny. “Let’s go.”

The couple walked out and left Hermione standing there alone.

They only went to the church foyer before Disapparating to the Burrow. Harry turned to Ginny and put his arms around her. "If I am ever that dense again, will you please knock some sense into me?"

"I think that you are being too hard on yourself, Harry. You had other things on your mind at the time. Ron's little sister just wasn't one of them."

Harry's eyes took on a mischievous glint. "Well, Ron's little sister is on my mind now."

They heard movement coming from the kitchen and looked up as Ron came out of the kitchen munching on a sandwich. "I heard my name...oh..." he swallowed. "...Hello."

Ginny smiled uneasily. "Hi, Ron. What are you doing here?"

Ron looked at his sister. "Um...we thought we would come a little early. You know...to help."

"Everyone is at the church, Ron," Ginny said. "Including Hermione."

Ron looked surprised at this. "She said she was going upstairs to lie down. I should have known. I'm sorry you two. I hope she didn't cause any trouble."

Harry narrowed his eyes. "Why? Are you expecting her too, Ron?"

At the question from Harry, Ron threw his hands in the air. "Merlin only knows, Harry. I don't know what to expect from her lately. Look, I'm sorry if she caused you any trouble. I'll TRY to keep her in line tonight."

Harry noticed that Ron looked embarrassed and smirked. "Trouble in paradise, Ron?"

"You have no idea." The answer came as a mumble as he turned and went back to the kitchen.

Ginny's eyes followed her brother until he disappeared into the kitchen then she turned back to her husband. "Well, that went – OK – I guess."

"Is it terrible of me to be happy that it isn't going well?"

Ginny just shook her head and didn't answer.

Harry sighed. "One of them here and one of them there. It's like they are trying to divide and conquer.

"Harry let's just go into town and go shopping or something."

"All right by me. Hey, I know, I'll buy you a new dress to wear tonight."

"Oh, well I thought that I would wear the dress that Moira loaned me."

"Oh come on, Gin, let's do it up right. You know you want to. White dress, veil, garter, the whole works. It'll look great in the pictures."

Ginny looked up at Harry slyly. "Well, I have always wanted..."

"Great, let's go." He took her hand before she had a chance to change her mind and they Apparated back into the town.

They spent the afternoon shopping and enjoying the peace before the chaos of the reception took them over.

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The party lasted late into the night. Every wizard they knew and some that they didn't had turned up to celebrate the wedding of Harry Potter to Genevra Weasley.

Draco and Moira Apparated in as a surprise to Ginny and Harry. Harry's lips split into a wide grin. "Hey you two. I didn't know you were coming. It's good to see you."

"You didn't think that we would let this pass, did you? Besides you know me, I never pass up a good party..." He looked around the room at the people. "...Even if it is full of red heads."

Harry laughed but Ginny just frowned at him and grunted. "Hmmpf." Then she walked over to Moira and hugged her. "Thanks for coming, Moira."

Everyone seemed to be having a good time. That is except for Ron and Hermione. It seemed to Harry that they spent the entire night arguing about something. He couldn't help but smirk.

Finally, while Ginny and Harry were dancing, they heard Ron explode. "What do you mean you are jealous, Hermione?"

Harry turned and looked at the couple, and watched as Hermione blushed at all the attention that was now being sent their direction. Ron didn't seem to notice though and continued on.

"You are absolutely unbelievable. If you wanted Harry so badly, then why..."

"Will you be quiet! Everyone is watching us." She hissed at him.

He leaned over the table and got in her face. "I don't care if God himself is watching us. I've had it. I'm not taking it any more. Do you understand me, Hermione? We are through – history." He straightened up and looked around the room and noticed for the first time that all eyes, including Harry's and Ginny's, were on them. With as much dignity as he could muster. He approached his sister and kissed her cheek, then turned to Harry. "I am deeply sorry, Harry. The last thing in the world I wanted to do was pull attention away from the two of you.

"I'll be leaving. Ginny, Harry, congratulations. I'm glad that things finally worked out for you two." With a last look of regret at Harry, Ron left the church with his back straight and his head held high.

Hermione was another thing all together. She sat there and downed the champagne she was drinking, stood up and approached the newlyweds. "I hope you both rot in hell!" She purposely knocked into Ginny with her shoulder and Harry made as if to grab her, but Ginny stopped him. "Don't Harry. Let it go. For me?"

He looked up at Hermione's smirk and smiled a humorless smile. "Out of deference to my wife, Hermione, I am not going to knock you on your backside like you deserve. But I want you to leave now! You are not welcome here." He looked up and his eyes caught Fred's and he motioned him over. "In fact, if you need help following my instructions there is plenty of help here to explain it to you. Now, you can do so quietly or not; it's up to you"

By this time, Fred and George were standing on either side of Harry.

"Which is it, Hermione? Will you leave quietly or do you need help?"

She looked him up and down as if appraising him. "What did I ever see in you? I'm leaving, but not because you told me too. I'm leaving because I can not tolerate your presence any longer." She spun on her heel and went up the stairs.

Harry and Ginny watched her leave with Fred and George directly behind her.

It took Harry a minute to calm down enough to talk. When he did turn and look at his wife, he smiled. "Gin, we are still facing the interview I promised to Rita. Should we go and get it over with or do you want to stay here for a while?"

She rubbed a gentle hand up and down his arm. "Let's just get it over with. Besides, if Rita is anywhere near, she will sniff out Hermione. That would probably not be a good situation."

Harry rolled his eyes. "You're right, let's go!"

The two of them hurried up the stairs and sought out the reporter. "Too late!" Ginny said with exasperation.

Harry looked around and saw his ex-wife talking to the bespectacled woman. With a groan, Harry approached the two. Completely ignoring Hermione, he looked at Rita. "Rita, I take it that you don't want that interview I promised you?"

"Harry! How nice to see you again. Of course I want to talk to you."

“You are violating one of the conditions, though Rita.”

Hermione smirked. “Afraid of what I will tell her, Harry?”

“Why would I be afraid, Hermione? I am not the one that slept with my best friend while my spouse went to work for the Ministry. I am not the one that just made a scene in front of practically the entire wizarding world because you are bored with Ron. I’m not the one that got kicked out of a wedding with an escort. Should I go on?” He turned to the reporter. “Are you getting all of this, Rita?”

He saw the quick quotes quill scribbling frantically and he nodded in satisfaction. “Oh yes, Harry. Every word.”

Hermione pursed her lips and spun on her heel and left them standing in the church courtyard.

Harry snickered to himself, put a hand on the reporter’s back and waved a hand in front of him. “After you, Rita!”

They entered the church chapel and Harry directed the reporter to a seat and sat next to Ginny. “All right, Rita, do you want the pictures first or the interview?”

“Oh, the interview. Lars, my photographer will be snapping pictures while we talk. Now, Harry, I know that you and Mrs. Potter met at school, was it love at first sight?”

“Actually, we met at The Burrow. I was spending the remainder of the summer with the Weasley family. But I saw her even before that. She was on platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ seeing her brothers off as they left for school. She was ten, I was eleven. As far as it being love at first sight, unfortunately, I would have to say, no.

“I had just found out that there was a whole new world out there that I didn’t know about; I had just found out that my parents deaths were not as I had been told; and most importantly, I had just found out that I was a wizard. All of that, coupled with the fact that I was only eleven and hadn’t discovered girls yet – well I think that I can be forgiven the fact that I barely noticed her.”

Then Harry turned and looked at Ginny. "But the most important thing is that I finally did notice." He put an arm around her and pulled her closer into his side.

Rita listened to Harry intently as she formulated her next question. "I want to ask you about your marriage to Hermione Granger."

Harry frowned. "No, Rita! If you want to ask about Ginny or me, that we will do. I do not want to talk about that other woman."

"Hmm, I see. Well then, answer me this, if you please, what happened to destroy the marriage? Did you just get tired of her?"

Harry smirked. "Come now, Rita, you heard enough of the conversation to know exactly what happened. Why ask me again?"

"Because I want your side of it."

"This is not a war. I'm not trying to win people to my side, as you put it. What happened, happened. I didn't like it, but I'm over it. I have moved on to a better part of my life. Ginny is that better part."

"Very well, Harry. OK, Hermione Granger is off limits. Will you tell me how you and Ginny got together?"

Harry smiled. "That is a story best told by Ginny, but I guess you could say that we owe all of our happiness to Lucius Malfoy."

It was a rare occasion when the boisterous Rita Skeeter was at a loss for words, but that revelation took her totally by surprise.

Ginny and Harry then began to relate to her what had happened. Thirty minutes later, Harry looked at his watch. You have ten minutes for photos Rita, then we are leaving."

"Oh, but Harry, I have so much more that I want to ask you."

"Sorry, Rita, but a deal is a deal, and you are wasting time."

She looked at him with narrowed eyes. "You've gotten hard, Harry."

"No, just smart, Rita."

“Hmm – well, be that as it may, let’s get some pictures.” She turned to a young man with cameras hanging around his neck. “Lars, darling, could you please get the posed pictures.” Harry and Ginny posed for pictures. Lars must have taken hundreds of them.

Then at the end of the ten minutes Harry put his hands up. “All right, Rita. That’s the end of it. I am taking my wife home and getting some well deserved rest.”

“You promised me pictures.” Her voice was sing songy as she spoke to him.

Harry reached into the inside pocket of his suit and pulled out a small packet of photographs of the wedding. “Here ya go, Rita.”

She snatched up the envelope of pictures like she was afraid that Harry would change his mind. “Thank you.”

“Good night, Rita. Happy writing!”

He took Ginny in his arms and winked at her. “You ready, love?”

“Absolutely. We need to get Miki to bed.”

Chapter 21 – Reginold Andrew Parkhurst IV, of Slytherin house

The following morning, after a hearty breakfast that Molly insisted on, Draco and Moira left to go back to Hawaii, and Harry and Ginny left to go to Hogwarts. Harry wanted to get Professor Dumbledore's input on Mikeal's special talents.

They took the Knight Bus to Hogsmeade and then walked up through the gates and into the front door. Miki's face was a study of awe as they walked through the streets of the wizarding village. When they arrived at the gates of the school, he took in every detail of the grounds. At the front entrance, he watched the pictures and tapestries on the walls, the students walking around in their wizard's robes but most especially the moving staircases.

He tugged on Harry's sleeve. "Daddy, this is so cool."

Harry smiled down at his son. "Yes it is, isn't it?" He looked at Ginny. "Let's go find Albus."

They stopped as an out of breath young man approached. Harry noticed the Head Boy badge right away. He smiled at the youth and stuck a hand out. "Harry Potter."

The boy was practically stricken dumb. "I'm sorry, did you say – Harry Potter?"

With a smile he answered. "Yes, and my wife Ginny and my son Mikeal."

He stared at Harry for a long moment then seemed to snap himself out of it. "Oh, I'm sorry, Mr. Potter. Sandringham, Eric Sandringham, Head Boy. May I ask what your business is in Hogwarts, Mr. Potter?"

"Yes, the Headmaster is expecting us."

"Headmaster Dumbledore didn't say anything to me. But I suppose that..." He trailed off realizing that he was about to say something unkind about the Headmaster of Hogwarts. "If you would follow me, I will see that you get there."

Ginny smiled at the boy. "Thank you, Eric."

As they walked, Ginny noticed that the greater part of the students were in Great Hall where lunch was currently being served. Several students stopped and stared at the trio as they passed.

They came to the gargoyle and Harry looked around then whispered "lemon custard" and the gargoyle jumped and allowed them to pass. Miki giggled. "Make it do that again, daddy. That was funny."

Harry chuckled. "Not right now, Mikeal. Now do you remember what I told you about the man we are going to meet? You are to give him all of your respect. Do exactly as he asks you, OK?"

"Of course, daddy. Behave myself, right?"

"You've got it, mate. Well, let's go you two."

Eric stopped them before they could go up the steps. It was almost as if he wanted the visitors to acknowledge his authority as Head Boy. "Ahh – if you need anything, Mr. Potter..." He nodded his head toward Ginny. "...Mrs. Potter, please feel free to ask anything of me. I will be waiting to escort you when you are ready to leave."

Harry smiled at the youth. "Thank you, Eric. I appreciate your help in the matter."

Sandringham smiled and puffed out his chest a bit. "Anytime, Mr. Potter."

The little family stepped onto the spiraling stairs and was met at the top by Albus Dumbledore. Harry was immediately pulled into a hug from the old man and was quickly released. Then he pulled Ginny into a bone crushing hug as well.

Miki watched all of this. He looked at his father, then his mother, then up at the strangely dressed man.

"Come in, come in. It is so good to see you all." The old man waved his hands and three comfortable chairs appeared out of the air. Miki giggled a bit then put a hand over his mouth as he watched the old

mans chair follow where he walked. Albus saw to it that they were all comfortable then moved behind his desk with the chair waddling along behind him.

“Albus, this is Mikeal, my son.” At the sound of his name, the youngster’s head snapped around to focus on the bearded man. His attention had wavered as his eyes followed shelf after shelf of interesting looking items. Some were spinning, some were humming still others were jogging back and forth as if keeping guard. His eyes were wide with wonder as he looked at the old man.

The twinkle in Dumbledore’s eyes caught the boy’s attention now.

“Well then, Mikeal. It is very nice to finally meet you. Your daddy has told me all about you.”

Mikeal smiled up at the Headmaster. “He has told me a lot...” But his attention was grabbed by a silver brazier that toddled over to him and sat by his feet. “...WHAT’S THAT?” At his outburst, the brazier scuttled under his chair and back to its place in the middle of the room. He didn’t know whether to be frightened or amazed. He pulled his feet up and tucked them in the chair and leaned down to look under his chair where the magical item had escaped at his yell.

The adults chuckled and Harry stood and pulled Mikeal into his lap. Miki looked up into Harry’s face. His eyes were wide and very serious and he whispered, “Daddy, did you see that?”

Harry laughed. “Yes, I saw it, son. There is nothing to be afraid of in here Miki.” Ginny and Albus both looked at him with skeptical faces then Harry shrugged. “Well, not much anyway.”

Albus chuckled and motioned to the boy. “ Mikeal, would you like a closer look at my toys?”

The boy’s eyes were wide. “These are toys?”

Albus shrugged. “Some of them are. Would it bother you if your mum and daddy went and visited some old friends while you and I talk?”

Miki looked at Harry and Ginny and smiled. "I'm gonna talk to Professor Dumbledore, mum and daddy."

Harry looked at Ginny. "I guess we've been dismissed, love." They stood and went to the door. The last thing they heard from Miki as they left was, "I like your beard. You look like a grandpa."

Ginny giggled when the gargoyle jumped back into place behind them. "That was quite a show that the Professor put on for him."

Harry hugged her close. "Well, you know as well as I do that he never misses a chance to show off a bit. Now, I know you want to go see Minerva but I think I am going to head down to the dungeons for a bit."

"You are going to see Snape? Why?"

Harry shrugged. "I haven't had my quota of causing trouble today." He kissed her cheek and waved to her. "I'll see you later."

He heard her chuckle as he made his way down to the dungeons. The door to the potions classroom stood slightly ajar which meant that the professor was currently inside. He quietly pushed the door open and leaned against the jamb. He folded his arms and crossed his legs and watched the dark professor grading essay's.

Harry smirked. "Well, if it isn't Hogwarts own Dark Lord hard at work."

Severus Snape's head snapped up at the intrusion and when he saw the source of the interruption, he shook his head. "Thought I got rid of you six years ago, insolent brat."

"Well, I'm just like a bad sickle. I just keep turning up." Harry walked into the room and sat on the edge of Snape's desk. "How are you Severus?"

The dark professor leaned back in his chair and looked at his former student. "Not as good as I was a minute ago. Take a stack of these essay's and make yourself useful if you insist on interrupting me."

Harry laughed and picked up the essay on the top. The entire paper was covered in little hearts. He laughed. "Looks like one, Citaubry Williamson, is trying to get your attention."

Severus rolled his eyes. "Are you here for a reason, Mr. Potter, or are you just trying to make my life a living hell?"

Harry studied the parchment in front of him and absently answered him. "Of course I'm here for a reason, Severus. I'm here to grade first year essay's. Hey, she's pretty good. She reminds me of Herm..." Harry stopped talking and sighed.

Once again Severus leaned back and studied him. "I had heard that you married Miss. Granger."

"I did, yes."

"And now you are married to Miss. Weasley?"

"Yes, I am."

There was silence for a long while as the two men stared at each other. Then the older man broke the silence. "Are you happy, Harry?"

Harry smiled. "Yes, I am."

Severus nodded and had a satisfied look on his face. "Good. Now get busy! These papers aren't going to grade themselves."

Harry laughed. "I'm surprised that you haven't come up with a way to do just that."

The two sat in what was companionable silence as they read over papers. Harry only looked up when students began filing into the room.

"Looks like that is my cue to leave."

"Nonsense. You are teaching the class, Mr. Potter."

"What?"

Severus stood and glared at the incoming students who quickly and quietly took their seats. They stared in turn from their teacher to the man they knew as Harry Potter. There was quite a lot of whispering as the students realized who was in attendance that day.

Harry on the other hand was in shock. He couldn't teach Severus' class. He didn't even know what potion to give them to work on. He quickly went through Severus' notes for the day's class and groaned. "Healing draught?" He walked up to Severus, turned his back on the class and whispered in his most furious voice. "I'll get you for this, Snape."

An amused chuckle escaped and he cleared his throat to hide the fact. "Today class, we have a guest teacher. I'm sure you have all heard of the obnoxious, Harry Potter. Let us see if he remembers anything from his time with me.

Severus Snape turned and smirked at Harry, who narrowed his eyes. The professor gathered up the parchments and went into his inner office. Harry watched him go and smirked. He turned to the class and whispered, "Whew, I thought he's never leave."

That comment won him many chuckles. He leaned against the desk and studied Severus' notes a bit more then spoke to the class. "You know, today you were supposed to do Healing Draughts. Just between you and me, healing draughts are not my forte. Let's do something else. Any ideas?"

A young lady in the back of the room shyly put up her hand. Harry smiled at her. "Yes Miss...?"

"Cumberland."

"Alright, Miss. Cumberland, what would you suggest?"

She blushed and Harry knew he was in for it. "Ahh...a love potion?"

The class laughed and Harry smiled at her. "Well, that would be fun, but they are also outlawed. Any other suggestions?"

A boy in the front of the class narrowed his eyes at Harry and smirked. Harry noticed the Slytherin crest on his school robes and was immediately reminded of Draco at that age. He looked at the young man and smirked back. "And your name is..."

"Reginold Andrew Parkhurst IV. Slytherin house. Seventh year."

Harry smiled at the barely contained animosity the boy was showing him. "Well, Reginold Andrew Parkhurst IV, of Slytherin house, seventh year, what potion would you like to brew today?"

"In stead of working on a potion today, I'd like to know how you were lucky enough to kill the greatest wizard that ever lived?"

As one the class gasped, but Harry held up a hand quieting the class. "Is there anything specific you would like to know, Mr. Parkhurst?"

"Yes. I would like to know *how* you did it. And I would like to know *why* you did it. Voldemort's plan for the wizarding world was one of unity and power. Now, because of you, it is chaos. My father says..."

"Mr. Parkhurst, please, let me stop you right there. I respect your opinion and your right to voice it as long as it is *your* opinion. I assume that you are able to think for yourself, are you not?"

"Of course I am."

"Excellent. Then let's leave what your father says out of this and tell me what you know of my fight with Voldemort."

This caught the boy off guard for a moment, then he straightened himself in his chair and smirked. "You attacked him, unprovoked."

"Unprovoked? Hmm, well, I suppose that there are those that would say that. Mr. Parkhurst, and the rest of the class as well, would you like to hear what happened that night?"

He looked around the room and saw only eager nods. He turned to the young Slytherin. "And you, Mr. Parkhurst, do you want to hear the story?" But Harry held up a hand to stop him from commenting. "Or

am I wasting my breath because your father does your thinking for you?"

He watched the boy sputter for a while. "My father does not do my thinking for me."

"I'm very glad to hear that, Mr. Parkhurst. Now, I'm sure most of you know the story of the boy who lived..."

At the end of the double potions there was a collective groan from the class. They were so enthralled with Harry's story that the time flew by. As they filed out of the room, Harry called the young Slytherin boy to the front of the room.

"Mr. Parkhurst, are you all right? You look a bit piqued."

"Is what you said true?"

Harry nodded. "Every word."

"But my father said..." But he looked at Harry who just smiled at him.

"Go ahead, Mr. Parkhurst, tell me what your father said."

"He said that Voldemort had the right of it. That it was only a matter of time before someone else would rise up and take the Dark Lord's place. Some one stronger and more lethal."

Harry smiled sadly. "On that point, he is correct. But think, if you will, Mr. Parkhurst what it would be like to be subservient to such a person. All choices taken from you at the pain of death. People might as well be trained robots, and for what, for the narrowed view of perfection coming from an imperfect being. Your father is right. There will always be someone waiting in the wings to take over, but see, people, Muggle or wizard, need to be able to make their own choices. Does that institute chaos?" Harry chuckled here. "It absolutely does. Is that an excuse for someone to come in and make the world over in their idea of perfection? Absolutely not. That chore is for God, and when we have the mind of God, then maybe we will be qualified to make those decisions. I am not qualified to make that decision. Never have been and never will be."

“Then why fight at all.”

“I fought to keep the world at the level of chaos that it needed to think for itself. *That* is what I did in a nut shell. Seems pretty simple for all the hype that is attached with it doesn’t it?”

The boy nodded, then stuck a hand out to Harry. “You’ve given me something to think about, sir. Thank you.”

“You’re welcome, Mr. Parkhurst.”

“Regie, my friends call me Regie.”

Harry nodded. “Regie then; and you can call me Harry. Now, you’d best hurry if you are going to be on time for your next class.”

As soon as the boy left, Severus re-entered the classroom. “Well done, Mr. Potter.”

Harry watched as the boy left, then answered Severus without looking at him. “You knew that that was going to happen, didn’t you?”

“Yes. I have had trouble with that boy since he arrived here. I have tried talking to him but with no success. I knew as soon as he realized who you were that he would attack you. He didn’t let me down.” Severus put a hand on Harry’s shoulder. “And neither did you, Mr. Potter. Now the boy has something to think about.”

Harry sighed. “Is his father in Lucius’ camp?”

“I’m not certain, but I believe so.”

Harry only nodded sadly.

Chapter 22 – He's just a big pussy cat

As soon as Harry and Ginny left the office, Mikeal turned to the professor. "I like your beard. You look like a grandpa."

"Would you like me to be your grandpa, Mikeal?"

"Uh huh. You have neat toys."

Albus laughed. "My boy, you are a delight. Let's sit down and talk, shall we?" He took the young man's hand. Instantly there was a flow of awareness between the two and they just looked at each other.

Albus chuckled. "Well, that was interesting."

Miki looked at his hand. "What was that, Grandpa?"

I'm not certain, but I think it was a good thing. "Miki, would you like something to eat?"

"Yes. Mum says it is impolite to ask, but I'm hungry."

"Very well, son. Dobby?"

There was a pop and the house elf appeared instantly.

"Ahhhh." Miki ran and hid behind the voluminous robe of the professor and peeked around his legs.

"It's all right, Miki. This is Dobby, Hogwarts most loyal house elf. Come on out and say hello."

Miki inched around the professor's legs and put his fingers in his mouth. "Uh...hi."

Dobby bowed. "Hello, young sir. How can Dobby serve you and the great Professor Dumbledore?"

When Miki didn't look like he was going to say anything, the headmaster filled in the silence. "Dobby, this is Harry Potter's young son, Mikeal"

The elf's eyes got wide and bowed deeply to the boy. Then he looked up at the professor. "Sir, is Mr. Harry Potter in the castle?"

"Yes, he is, Dobby. Before you go find Harry, would you be so kind as to provide a lunch for our young guest here? He informs me that he is hungry."

"Oh, right away, Professor sir. Dobby will return in a moment."

True to his word, the elf returned to the office with several trays laden with all sorts of good things to eat. Miki's eyes bulged at the amount of food.

He leaned over and whispered to Albus. "Grandpa, do I have to eat all of this. I don't think I can."

Albus laughed, good naturedly. "No, my boy. Just eat what you want and don't worry about the rest."

While they ate, Albus questioned Mikeal on his abilities and his Spirit Guides and any other aspect of Miki's gift that came to mind. By the time they finished, Albus Dumbledore had a very good idea about what was going on with Miki. He even had the opportunity to talk to Wolf. Miki sat on Albus' lap and began talking to his guide then Albus used his wand to connect the two of them so that he could see what Miki was seeing in his trance.

"All in all my youngling, today's meeting was quite successful. Do you have any questions, or anything that you wish to talk about?"

"Yeah, Grandpa. What was that feeling when you held my hand?"

"I believe my boy that it was a recognition of different powers. You, my young Grandson, are a very powerful boy. You must always strive to listen to your spirit guides and use your power for the good of all. Your father has done that on numerous occasions. He is a good man and your mother is a good woman. You are a very lucky boy."

"Thank you, Grandpa. I have another question. When I get eleven, can I come to school here?"

“Well, unfortunately son, there is very little here that we could teach you. Your powers are far beyond those of a wizard and very different at that. I shall strive to find you a school that will help you in the areas that you can use. You see, your power is different. You would not be able to use a wand or fly a broom or any of the other things that a wizard boy would be able to do. But you can do things that other wizarding children wouldn’t be able to dream of. Don’t worry son. By the time you are of age, I will have found a school for you.”

He looked crest fallen. “But, I want to come here. Mum and Daddy came here and it is neat.”

“I am gratified that you think so, my boy. But I daresay that that opinion would change if you attended classes here. Don’t worry so, Miki. We’ll get it figured out. Now maybe we should find your mum and dad.”

Miki still wasn’t convinced, but let it drop incase the subject got into the area of being disrespectful. His daddy had warned him against that; and he didn’t want to embarrass his daddy and mum.

Ginny was waiting in front of the Gargoyle for Miki and Albus. When he saw her, he ran and gave her a big hug. “Mum, Grandpa Albus said that he would find me a school when I get old enough, but I want to come here. Maybe you can talk to him.” The last statement was said in a whisper so only Ginny could hear.

She laughed lightly. “We’ll see about that later, love. That’s a whole six years away.”

There was suddenly a look of determination on his face. “I’m gonna come here, mum. Just wait and see.”

“All right, Miki. What ever you say. Hey let’s go find dad shall we? We need to get back to The Burrow. Grandma Molly is going to have dinner waiting for us.

Albus led mother and son down to the dungeon’s and to Professor Snape’s classroom just as the class let out.

They waited for the last student to file out then entered, only to hear the last of the conversation that Harry was having with a young man. When the boy approached he stepped back in deference to the Headmaster. "Excuse me, sir."

Ginny watched Severus clap Harry on the shoulder and say something to him but couldn't hear what was said. What ever it was, it seemed to make Harry sad.

The three of them approached Harry and Severus. "Severus, that was young Mr. Parkhurst, was it not?"

"Yes, Headmaster, it was."

"What may I ask precipitated his sudden change of attitude?"

Severus clapped Harry on the back again. "It seems that Mr. Potter has a mouth that only occasionally gets him into trouble these days. Too bad he didn't learn that talent when he attended school here."

Harry rolled his eyes. "Would it kill you, just once, to say something nice to me? Just once. That's all I'm asking."

Severus smiled. "You wouldn't be able to handle it, Mr. Potter. Now if you will excuse me. My next class is due in and you are blocking my doorway."

"Well, excuse me." Under his breath he murmured. "Ya old grease ball."

Severus was already walking back down to his desk but yelled over his shoulder. "I heard that, Mr. Potter. Ten points from Gryffindor."

"I don't attend school here any more. You can't take points away from me."

Severus turned and spotted Miki. "And who is this young man?"

"This is my son, Professor. Miki, can you say hello to Professor Snape?"

But Miki pulled Harry's ear down to his level. "I don't like him daddy. He is mean to you."

"Not really, son. He just likes to act like he is mean. He is really just a big pussy cat, aren't you Professor Snape? Say hello, Miki."

Miki decided right then and there that if he was going to come to school here, that he was going to have to get this man on his side. He bowed deeply to the Dark Professor. "It is a pleasure to meet you, Professor Snape."

Severus looked surprised. "And for me as well, young man, finally a Potter with manners." He glanced up at Harry with humor showing in his eyes.

Harry looked at the man and smirked. "Nice."

Miki straightened up and had a huge grin on his face. He then turned and made his way out of the classroom with the adults trailing behind.

The family made their way back to the front doors of Hogwarts. Ginny hugged the Professor and Miki shook his hand. Then Harry smiled and took Albus' hand as well. But the old man looked at him oddly.

"Harry looked confused. "Albus, are you all right?"

He was still looking at him as if trying to figure something out, then shook his head, relegating his thoughts to something to take care of later.

Harry smiled at him but furrowed his brow. "Albus?"

He dismissed Harry's concerns with a wave of his hand. "Oh, it's nothing my boy, nothing at all. Now, you have a safe trip back to The Burrow and back to Hawaii. Harry we will talk at length, later. Maybe you can visit me before you leave for home."

"All right, Albus. We will be leaving in two days. Would you like me to come back tomorrow?"

“Yes, that would be fine. In the meantime tell Molly and Arthur hello for me.”

Albus looked at his newly acquired Grandson. “Take care of your folks, Miki. They need constant watching over.” He put an arm around Harry’s shoulder. “Especially this one.”

“Yes sir, I’ll do my best.”

With a twinkle in his eye he answered. “That’s all I can ask. Goodbye all.”

He spun and in a flurry of robes was gone. The family made their way out onto the grounds, back into Hogsmeade and caught the Knight Bus to back to The Burrow.

Chapter 23 – Shut up and kiss me

Once the house had settled down that evening, Harry took Ginny up to her old room. He closed the door and locked it. “Do you realize that we have had zero time together?”

He pressed her up against her door and kissed her gently, following the line of her jaw to her ear. He playfully nipped at her earlobe making her giggle. “Harry, that tickles.”

He smiled an impish smile and waggled his eyebrows. “I know. He picked her up and carried her to the bed. He was just beginning to pay some real attention to her neck when someone knocked on the door.

Harry groaned. “Next time, we stay at a hotel!”

Ginny smiled and caressed his cheek then called over his shoulder. “Just a minute.”

She got up and opened the door to George and Miki. “Hey, you two. What are you up to?”

“Uncle George wants me to go to his house mum. Can I?”

Ginny leaned up against the door jamb and looked at her brother. “What are you up to George?”

“Nothing, I swear. Just thought you two could use some time. That’s all. Really.”

Both parents looked skeptical.

Harry looked at George then got down to Miki’s level. “Mik, you have more sense in your little finger than your Uncle George has in his whole body. I’m going to need you to keep him out of trouble, OK?”

Miki looked up at George and giggled. “OK, daddy. Does that mean I can go?”

“Yes, you can go. George, behave yourself.”

He held his arms out. "Hey, it's me."

"That's my point exactly."

Harry and Ginny watched them walk away then closed the door again. Then they heard George and Miki laugh. Harry looked at his wife. "Oh, I don't like this."

"Relax, sweetheart. George won't let anything happen to him."

"Yeah, well, that may be, but it's what they get up to in the interim that concerns me."

Then Ginny sighed and looked at him. "Hey, you were doing something before they came to the door." She put her arms around his neck. "I just can't remember what that was. Perhaps your memory is better than mine."

A slow grin spread across his face. "Oh, I think I can remember. I think I was right about here." He nuzzled her neck and nibbled his way to her ear and sucked playfully on her earlobe. She groaned and relished the sensations he was creating that seemed to settle in the pit of her stomach.

Her hands slid up his chest and caressed his shoulders, then wrapped around his neck and up into his hair. Harry picked her up and carried her back to their bed. "Ginny, I am so in love with you. I don't know what I would ever do without you."

"You are never going to have to find out, Harry. I will always be here for you. Even when you don't want me to be."

"I can't imagine a time that I won't want you around, Gin."

She giggled. "Well, when I start throwing curses around, you might question your sanity."

He ran his hand over her breast. "You going to start throwing curses anytime soon, love?"

She smiled and caressed his cheek. "If anyone comes to that door again tonight, I might. Harry..."

"Yes?"

"Shut up and kiss me."

He smiled. "As my lady wishes." Harry leaned over and kissed her lips gently at first, but deepened it and possessed her mouth. "Mine." He trailed kisses down her neck. "Mine." He quickly undid the buttons of her blouse. "Mine." He spread the blouse open and slid his hand under her bra. "Mine."

"You're awfully possessive, love."

He grinned and his eyes twinkled at her. "You are mine, Genevra Potter."

"Yes, I am. And you are mine. So what are you going to do about it?"

"I'm sure I'll think of something."

Chapter 24 – The Pitch

The following day, Harry Apparated to Hogsmeade and made his way to Hogwarts. He was about fifteen minutes early so he went to see Professor McGonagall.

“Oh, Harry, it is good to see you. Come in, come in.” She turned to her students. “Class, we are very lucky to have a visitor today. This is Harry Potter.”

He nodded his head to the students. Then he noticed Regie Parkhurst. His smile was genuine. “Hello Reg. How are you today?”

The boy beamed as if he were a first year, then pretended to smirk at Harry. He sauntered up to Harry until he was close enough to talk without being heard. “Mr. Potter, may I have a word with you after class?”

Harry understood that the young man had a reputation to uphold so he wasn't surprised by his behavior. He answered him in a low whisper. “Well, Reg, I have a meeting with the Headmaster in about five minutes. Let's catch up during lunch. I'll meet you in the Great Hall.”

“Thank you, sir.” He then stepped away and sneered and looked him up and down, then turned to his cronies. “Probably expects us to bow and scrape to him. Well not us, right?”

Several of the students came up to flank him. “Right, Regie.” The small group made its way to the door, but Professor McGonagall gasped. “Mr. Parkhurst, that is not acceptable behavior from a student in my class. Ten points from Slytherin.”

He turned and glared at the Professor. Then he spoke to his group, “Let's go.”

Harry looked at the class just as the bell rang. “I'm sorry to have to leave you but, like I said, I have a meeting. Sorry for the interruption Professor. I just wanted to say hello.”

“Not at all, Harry.”

Harry left the room and made his way to the gargoyle and whispered the password. "Lemon Custard," And went to the Headmasters office.

He knocked at the door and it was yanked open by a smiling Albus Dumbledore. "Ahh, Harry, thank you for coming. Please have a seat."

After he did, he looked at the old man. "You made quite an impression on my son, Albus."

"And he made quite an impression on me as well. He is very intelligent, you know."

"I know. Sometimes it's like having a full grown adult in a child's body."

Well, Harry, I asked you to come back for a reason. I wanted to talk to you about what I found out. Miki is a Shaman as you know. But his particular abilities are a bit different. Like most Shamen, he can heal, but if the impressions I got are real, he can also summon the elements. I am far from being an expert on the subject, but I did some detection spells on Mikeal yesterday. What I found was very interesting in deed."

"Interesting in what way?"

"Well, you know he is a seer, but did you know that he can see into the past as well as into the future?"

"The past?"

"That's right. He can understand any language that is spoken to him. Now, there is something I would like to ask you. Have you noticed that there are some people that he takes too immediately and some that he hangs back from?"

"Yes, he seems to be a very good judge of character. Why."

"That's because, he can detect the true nature of a person. If a person is inherently evil, he shies away from them, but if they have a good nature, then he takes to them right away."

Harry thought about this for a moment and smiled. "Well, that's a good thing. I wouldn't want him to be around people that are not good."

"He also can control animals. In fact, I wouldn't be at all surprised to find out that he is an animagus." The Headmaster shook his head in wonder then sighed. "If there are other talents, I didn't detect them, but admittedly, I don't know the full extent of Shamanism."

"I had no idea, Albus. I didn't notice any of those talents, but I haven't exactly put him in situations that would make him show them either." Harry leaned back in deep thought. "Hmm, well now that's something." Then Harry laughed. "You know that you have quite a fan there, grandpa."

Albus laughed. "Yes, well the feeling is mutual, Harry. Your son is quite a remarkable young man in his own right, even without his powers."

Harry studied the Professor for a moment then laughed. "Albus, what exactly did you tell Miki about coming to school here?"

The old man looked a bit sad. "I told him that it wouldn't be possible; that he wouldn't be able to participate in the classes."

"Well, that's what I thought. However, that young man is bound and determined that he is going to come to school at Hogwarts and no amount of reason is swaying him."

"I see. Well, we have six years to find him something more suitable."

"You don't understand, Albus. He is absolutely determined to get his way in this. In fact he said 'If I am a saw man then I need to understand all the magic in the world.'"

"All the magic in the world, hmm. He has set quite a task for himself."

The proud father shook his head. "He is beginning to act like Hermione did. The only difference is that he can barely read. In fact, he cajoled Ginny into taking him to Flourish and Blotts today to get magic books."

“Well, my advice to you, Harry, is to continue to introduce him to different aspects of magic. Don’t discourage him. Maybe when the time comes we can think of something.”

“I’ll do that.” Harry stood up and stuck a hand out to the Professor. “Albus, thank you for your time. We will be leaving tomorrow and I’m not certain when we will return. But you do know that you are welcome at our home anytime. In fact, come and spend some time after school is out. You’ll love Hawaii.”

“I just may do that, my boy. If circumstances allow that is.”

They shook hands and Harry left Dumbledore’s office. As he stepped through the opening past the gargoyle, he saw Regie Parkhurst waiting there. He quickly looked to see if his followers were around. Seeing that Reg was alone, he smiled. “Hello again, Reg.”

“Hello Mr. Pot...”

Harry held up a hand. “Harry.”

The seventeen year old nodded. “Harry then. Harry, can we go for a walk? I would really like to talk to you about what you said yesterday.”

“Sure. Do you have class now?”

“No, this is my free period.”

“Good, let’s go.”

The two left through the front doors and out onto the grounds.”

“Where to, Reg?”

“Quidditch Pitch?”

“All right, let’s go.”

The two walked in silence for a while. Harry allowed the boy to gather his thoughts as they headed to one of Harry’s favorite places in Hogwarts.

“Harry, you said some things yesterday that really made me think. I think that it must be the first time in my life that I have really done that.”

“Hey, don’t sell yourself short, Reg. There are a lot of people that *never* think for themselves. You are to be congratulated.”

“Yeah, but now I have to face my father. He’s going to hate me. He’ll probably disinherit me, but that is not what worries me.”

“What is it that worries you?”

“My mother. She will be heartbroken.”

“Standing on your own two feet is never easy. But I think you may be selling your folks short, Reg. Now, I don’t know them at all, but if they love you, they may listen to your reasons.”

Reg huffed. “You’re right. You don’t know my parents. They have been friendly with Lucius Malfoy for years.”

“Well, that is indeed a concern. I’ve dealt with Malfoy recently. It’s not pleasant. But it also isn’t an impossible task. If it were, I wouldn’t be here. Let me ask you something Reg. You are going to be leaving Hogwarts in a few months, am I right?”

The boy nodded. “Yes, just over three.”

“What are you planning to do when you leave here?”

Harry noticed that the boy looked embarrassed. “Well, this is the first time my future has ever been called into question. But now that I am not sure about what my father is going to do, I wish that I had put more effort into making that decision.”

“Well, its not too late you know. You are already in Professor Snape’s advanced potions and Professor McGonagall’s advanced transfiguration class. What other classes are you taking?”

“Charms, Herbology, Care of Magical Creature’s, Defense Against the Dark Arts and Arithmancy.”

Harry looked at the boy with raised eyebrows. "You are taking all of those advanced classes and you are worried about what you are going to do? Reg, you could do anything. What are your grades like?"

"O's mostly."

Harry rolled his eyes. "Reg, I think the biggest problem for you is that you will have a list about a mile long to choose from. If you would like, I can put a good word in for you at the Ministry. They are always looking for Auror's."

"Me? An Auror?"

"Why not?"

Reg looked at the ground in thought. "An Auror! But, I'm Slytherin. They will never let me be an Auror!"

Harry laughed. "Hey, I happen to know that your house affiliations during school have nothing what so ever to do with getting an appointment as an Auror. In fact I know someone who happened to be in the exact same shoes that you find yourself in and was appointed. In fact he was my partner."

"Who was it?"

"You ever hear of Draco Malfoy?"

The boy looked at Harry in disbelief. "Are you telling me that the Ministry actually appointed Lucius Malfoy's son to be an Auror?"

"Yes, they did. He is my best mate. In fact he and his wife are living in Hawaii with me and my family."

"Merlin! Well then, maybe there *is* a chance for me."

"If you want me to, I will stop by the Ministry before I leave tomorrow and talk to Davis Millson."

The boy looked at Harry in amazement. "You'd do that?"

"Of course I would. In fact, and this is up to you, talk to Davis before you say anything to your parents. I would also talk to the Headmaster. He will be able to direct you. As far as Mr. Millson is concerned, I'll write you a letter of introduction if you like."

"Thank you, Harry. I appreciate it."

Harry put a companionable arm around the boy. "Any time, Reg." Harry looked around and saw the school broom shed. "Hey, Reg, do you fly?"

The boy smirked. "Slytherin seeker."

"All right, now you've done it." Harry opened the broom shed and picked out one of the school's Nimbus 2000's and examined it. "In my day, the stock brooms were clean sweeps, and this..." He held up the broom in question. "...was the latest arrival. "Do you feel like playing a one on one?"

"A one on one with Harry Potter? I'll wipe the boards with you."

"Well, that's always a possibility I suppose. But let's see what you've got." Harry got a snitch from the chest and let it go. He smirked at Regie and took off into the air lazily circling the pitch looking for the flying gold ball.

Reg was mimicking Harry's every move so Harry decided to lead him off the track. Harry had seen the snitch but he dived in the opposite direction pulling up just inches from the ground, twirling at the last second in a graceful arc then sped toward the other end of the field.

Reg didn't fare as well. He didn't pull up in time and ended up tumbling off his broom in a somersault and lying on his back. He looked up at a smirking Harry, who hovered above him with the snitch in hand.

"Ah, Reg, your broom is over there. Whatcha doin' down there?"

"Bloody Gryffindor!"

Harry released the ball and they were off again. This time Reg caught it but not by much. Harry was with him side by side until Reg sped up just enough and cut across in front of his opponent, causing Harry to pull up to avoid a mid air collision. Reg easily snatched the snitch out of the air. Held it up and smirked at Harry. That's one to one, Gryffindor."

They played that way for over an hour not noticing the small crowd gathering to watch. By the time they called it quits, the two flyers had put on quite a show for the gathered throng of students.

Some of the group, were Slytherin. They began yelling at him as a traitor. "What do you think you are doing, Parkhurst. Why are you fraternizing with, Harry Potter?"

He rolled his eyes so that only Harry could see and whispered. "And so it starts, sorry, Harry."

Harry whispered. "Bring it on, Parkhurst."

Regie walked over to his fellow housemates. "What do you mean fraternizing, Benson? I cleaned his clock. Come on, let's get out of here. Being this close to Gryffindor scum is making me ill."

They all turned as one and Harry smiled as he watched them go. He returned the broom to the shed and began walking toward the gates as the crowd of students dispersed.

Once off the grounds, he Apparated back to The Burrow and was greeted with an arm full of five year old."

"I'm glad you're back, daddy. Come see what mum bought me today."

Harry looked through the books and smiled. "A bit advanced don't you think, Gin?"

"I tried to convince him that he wanted books that he could read all by himself. He said, "I don't know how to read now, but I will soon. And I don't want to be bored."

The next morning, Harry kissed Ginny goodbye and headed off to the Ministry to talk to Davis about Regie Parkhurst and set up a meeting between the two. He then Apparated back to The Burrow and Flooed Dumbledore to give Reg the details.

Once that was done, the little family said their goodbyes and left for home.

Chapter 25 – Strange Behavior

The time that they spent traveling home, Miki kept his nose in a book working through the words and constantly asking his parents for help. Finally Harry took the boy on his lap and began to read to him. The things that Miki didn't understand, he put into terms that Miki could understand.

After the boy fell asleep, Harry chuckled and looked over at Ginny. "Most kids want to read 'The Little Engine That Could' but our son wants to read..." Harry looked at the book he had been reading to his son. "...'Ten Easy Steps To Transfiguration'. I sure don't want him to get discouraged, Gin."

Harry shifted his son on his shoulder so that he could put an arm around his wife.

"He'll be fine Harry. There are things that he can do, that we can't. Now suppose you tell me what the Headmaster said about our son?"

By the time Harry finished telling her, Ginny's eyes were wide. "My goodness, Harry, he has nothing to be ashamed about. I never would have guessed. To me, he's just my little boy. I sometimes shudder to think what would have happened to him if you hadn't adopted him. Would anyone else have understood like we do?"

Harry shook his head. "You know, he told me that the first time he saw me, that wolf told him that I had come to take care of him."

"So what did he do?"

"He kicked me!"

Ginny laughed. "That's my boy."

"He said that he didn't want to leave Mrs. Lee and his friends."

"At four, after having lost his parents, I can understand that."

"I can too. I'm glad he finally came around though."

“Now, tell me about this kid at Hogwarts?”

“Reg? Well, he’s a great guy, really. Slytherin. The only reason I bring that up though is because he was trying very hard to maintain Slytherin expectations. His father follows Lucius and he spent most of his time spouting about what his father said or his father did. Sound familiar?”

Ginny nodded. “Draco!”

“Severus, prat that he is, tricked me into teaching his class. He knew that the kid would attack me verbally, if not physically, just because that was what was expected of him. So instead of teaching potions...”

Ginny smirked.

“What?” But Harry smirked too. “All right so I suck at potions. Anyway, instead of teaching potions, I told him about Voldemort. Actually the whole class was participating, but I was talking to him. When I came back the today, he wanted to talk. It ended up that I promised him that I would talk to Davis for him. All he needed was an excuse. Something to believe in. All I did was set him in the right direction. We’ll see what happens. I will tell you though, that I would hate to meet him across a battlefield. I find that I quite like him.”

By the time Harry, Ginny and Miki reached New York Harbor they were ready to put their feet on solid ground again. They stayed again at the Hyatt Regency and flew out early the next morning. The flight was much smoother this time, much to Ginny’s delight, and they made their way home via taxi from the airport.

When they walked in, Harry banished the suitcases upstairs and carried Mikeal to his bed.

Ginny went into the kitchen and was surprised to find Moira crying. “Hey, are you alright?” Then she looked disgusted. “What a stupid thing to ask, of course you’re not alright. Moira, what’s wrong?” Ginny sat next to her and ran a comforting hand up and down her back.

She sniffed and looked at her friend. “Oh, Ginny, I don’t know what’s wrong. It’s Draco. He received an owl from someone, I don’t know

who, and it seemed to put him in a horrid mood. I have never seen him act this way. And I especially have never heard him say the things he said. He swore like a sailor, he threw things. See that hole in the cabinet over there? He did that with his fist.

"Then he yelled at me. He said that I got pregnant on purpose and that he didn't want the baby and that I should get rid of it! Can you believe that, Ginny? When he first found out, he was ecstatic."

"What in heaven's name was in the letter?"

"I have no idea. As soon as he read it, he destroyed it."

Ginny sat deep in thought for a moment then looked at her friend.
"Where is he now?"

"Haven't a clue. He took off in his car several hours ago and I haven't heard from him since."

"I can send Harry to look for him if you like."

"No, he needs time to cool down. I just wish he would talk to me, Ginny. He would barely even look at me. I'm beginning to think that I did something or he thinks that I did something to him."

At that point, Harry walked into the kitchen. "Well, the littlest shaman is asleep. It didn't take...what's wrong Moira?"

Ginny looked up at him. "Draco is acting strangely."

"You mean stranger than usual?"

"Harry, don't act like an arse. This is serious. He got a letter from someone today and he went ballistic."

Harry narrowed his eyes. "Who was it from?"

"Don't know."

He nodded knowingly. "Lucius!"

Both girls looked up at him. "Lucius?"

“Yes. I’ve seen him act this way before. Once when we were in training, he got an owl from his father. He was out of it for days.” He looked sympathetically at Moira. “It affected everything that he did for about a week, then one day out of the blue, he apologized to me and then acted as if nothing was out of the ordinary. It was strange really. Moira, I think he will be fine. He just needs to learn not to react so badly to his father. I have never seen anyone hold so much hate for another family member before.” Harry shook his head.

Ginny looked angry. “That may well be Harry, but he told Moira that she got pregnant on purpose and that she should get rid of the baby.”

Harry stared at Ginny dumbfounded, then looked back at Moira. “Don’t get rid of the baby, Moira!”

The two girls looked at him. “Well duh, Harry!”

Draco didn’t return to the manor until late the next night. He was still in a frightful mood and scowled at the gathered group without saying anything, and went to his rooms.

Moira stood, then Ginny, but Harry motioned them both back to their chairs. “No! I’m handling this one, girls. I’ll be back.”

Harry followed Draco and found him pacing in his study. “WHAT IN MERLIN’S NAME IS WRONG WITH YOU, YOU GIANT PRICK?”

Draco growled at him. He reminded Harry of a wounded animal; one that you should approach with caution. But Harry was never one to listen to his own advice.

“Get out of my life, Potter! And take Ginny and Moira with you!”

“What’s wrong, Princess. Get another upsetting letter from, daddy? You know, it’s one thing to treat me that way, but to treat your wife that way...You should be taken out and hexed. How dare you tell her to get rid of the baby? How dare you treat her like she was yesterday’s rubbish. She loves you, Draco. Merlin only knows why, and you ...”

“Just shut it, Potter. You don’t know what you’re talking about. If you did, you...”

“THEN TELL ME!”

Draco waved a dismissing hand at Harry. “Just leave me alone. Go away. Get out of my life. I don’t even want to know where you are!”

Harry calmed down and looked at his friend. “We’ve been partners for a long time, Dray. We can get through anything. Won’t you let me help?”

Draco closed his eyes and growled. “The only thing you can do is get away from me.”

“Fine, Malfoy! I’ll leave you to sulk like the bastard that you are. If you decide that you want to be civil, you’ll know where to find me. In the mean time, I better never hear that you are being abusive to your wife. You said some pretty crappy things to her. You’ll be lucky if she ever talks to you again.”

“That is none of your business.”

“When you say the things to her that you did, I make it my business. You may be her husband, but you have no right to treat her that way. Good night. I hope you enjoy wallowing in your self pity!

Harry turned to leave but Draco picked up a book and threw it at him. Harry waved a hand and the book made a lovely arc in the air and landed on Draco’s head.

Harry laughed and slammed the door as he left.

As the week moved on, Draco began to mellow a bit, but he still was not himself. He made it a point to avoid Harry and Ginny although he did apologize to Moira and begged her forgiveness. But no matter how she pleaded, cajoled and wheedled, he would not tell her what the problem had been; or still was for that matter. He would just say, “I’d rather not talk about it.” And that was that.

For two months, Draco went out of his way to avoid Harry.

At first, Harry let it bother him. He couldn't imagine what he had done to upset the blond but after a while, he decided that it was just Draco being an idiot and left him alone.

On a sunny afternoon, Ginny went looking for Harry who was out in his 'Kitchen Garden'. Harry had found a new hobby and at any given time, if you were looking for him, he could be found there, magically growing the plants. He loved coaxing the tiny shoots into full grown plants that flowered, wilted, then grew into lovely tomatoes.

She stood in the doorway watching him as he forced the plants, then gave them a loving pat. "So what are you growing there, Harry?"

"Well, these are tomatoes." He pointed to another section of the garden. "And these are cucumbers, and over there are carrots and onions."

He looked at his accomplishment with pride. "Over on that side is corn."

"Hang around for a while, and you can have a fresh tomato."

Gin smiled. "I can't wait, Harry, but I just came to tell you that Moira, Miki and I are going shopping."

"How did you talk Miki into THAT!" He held up a hand. "No, don't tell me. It was either a stop at the book store or the library. Am I right?"

She kissed him on the cheek. "Both actually."

Harry pulled her close and kissed her gently then again with a lot more feeling. "I love you, Gin. Go, have fun. I'll see you later."

Ginny happily waved goodbye and left through the kitchen.

Moira kissed Draco. "When I get back we'll have enough decorations for the baby's room."

Draco smiled and nodded. "All right my lovely. Have fun."

With that she started toward the door but Draco hadn't let go of her hand. She looked at him with a smile. "What is it, Dray?"

"I love you. I love you more than I can tell you. Never forget that. I just...I just wanted you to know that."

She looked at him strangely for a moment then hugged him tightly. "I love you too, Draco. You act like I am going away for a long time. I'm just going shopping."

"Well – I – I worry about you, in your condition, that's all. Just be careful and take care of our son, all right?"

"All right, love. I'll see you this evening." Draco walked with her to the door. "See you later. Have fun, baby."

Then the three were off.

Draco watched them leave from the window of the Great Hall and smiled sadly after them.

Harry continued to work in the garden wondering what he did to deserve all of this. He loved his wife. He loved his son and he loved his house. In short, he loved his life.

For the first time in a very long time, he realized that he was quite content and happy.

Chapter 26 – Prisoner

Several hours had passed when a panicked Draco went looking for Harry.

He tore through the Manor looking for his partner, yelling at the top of his lungs. He finally found him in the kitchen gardens, picking a ripe tomato to eat. Harry looked up in concern as he watched Draco tear out of the door looking for him. “Harry! Damn it, where are you. This place is too big. Harry!”

“Draco, I’m here.” Harry narrowed his eyes at the panicked look on his friend’s face. “What’s going on?”

“He’s back! He’s back and he has Ginny and Miki!”

There was no need to ask whom Draco was talking about. “Where is he?” Harry’s voice was surprisingly calm; more so than Draco had ever seen him.

He didn’t say a word, he only handed Harry the note. *‘If you want to see your family again, you will take this Port Key and turn yourself over to your betters.’*

Harry looked up at Draco. “Did you read this?”

He only nodded, concern shining in his eyes.

“Where’s the Port Key?”

“Wait, Harry, you can’t. Let me get Dumbledore, or Severus, or – someone. Don’t just go off on your own. You probably won’t come back from this one if you do.”

“Draco, he has my family.” His voice was quiet and deadly. “Do you have any idea where Lucius might be?”

He shook his head. “I’m sorry, Harry; I haven’t a clue. Dumbledore may be able to trace a Port by tracking the magical signatures. I’ll get help and we’ll follow as soon as we can. If you insist on going, at least go prepared. Take your cloak.”

Harry shook his head. "No. I don't want it to fall into your father's hands, Dray. He knows I'm coming anyway. It would be a waste."

"Then, let me go with you. You can't do this alone."

Harry huffed. "With Moira pregnant? She'd skin you alive, Draco. I'd be more afraid of her than of Lucius."

"I'm serious, Harry."

"So am I, Draco. Stay here. Get help. And for Merlin's sake, come soon."

Draco put a comforting hand on his friend's arm. "Harry, Ginny is strong. She'll be fine. Don't do anything rash. Won't you please wait until help can arrive? You know that this is exactly what Lucius wants, don't you? He is not going to hurt either one of them. They are too valuable to him as hostages. He wants to provoke you into acting without thinking."

Harry shook his head and chuckled a bit. "That's when I do my best work. I have to do this. You would do the same if the situation was reversed, and you know it. Where's the key?"

Draco looked at the ground with a heavy sigh. "I left it lying where I found the note. It is probably keyed to you alone, but I didn't want to take a chance. It's out in the drive."

Harry followed his friend and immediately saw an old tuna can. He turned to Draco, "If I don't come back..." Harry held a hand out to the blonde.

"Don't – you'll come back, and Ginny and Miki will be with you. I'll get help." Draco took his hand and pulled him into a hug. "Don't trust anyone or anything, Harry, and just know that I'm so sorry."

Harry turned, took a deep breath and reached down for the empty can, and immediately felt that familiar tug behind his navel.

He appeared in a rocky, mountainous area, thick with trees and underbrush. He looked carefully at the surrounding area but saw no

one around. He was high enough, that he could see that he was on an island. He looked up and was startled to realize that he was standing directly below the cloud line. The air had a tinge of sulfur and heat was rising from the ground.

“A volcano then.” He whispered to himself.

What added to his discomfiture was that he knew that he was being watched. He could feel eyes boring into him.

He looked at the path and knew he could choose one of two directions. Down the side of the mountain, closer to people living on the island, or –

Harry turned and looked up the mountain with a sigh. With determination he started up the path.

There was constant cloud cover around the top of any of the island volcanoes, so he wasn't surprised to spend a good hour climbing in virtual blindness as the cloud engulfed him. As he felt his way along the path, he couldn't help but wonder if Lucius was simply hoping that he would make a misstep and fall to his death and have it over with. The trail was definitely showing signs of getting more treacherous.

With a sigh of relief, he came to an opening in the side of the jutting rocks. Harry examined the opening. It was small; small enough that he would have to crawl in on his hands and knees.

He explored the area thoroughly, but found no other entrances. He returned to the tiny opening and took a deep breath to steady his nerves. As he looked at the opening he could almost hear Mikeal's warning. *“Daddy, don't go to the cave. There's bad people!”*

He whispered to himself as he entered. “Sorry, mate, but daddy has to do this.” He ducked down to his hands and knees so he could enter. He could feel the dark magic permeating through the rock and into the very air. With a sigh, he began his trek through the cave.

Harry followed likely paths for what seemed like hours. It seemed that Lucius had decided to play games with him; allowing him to go off on wild goose chases. In his search, he took one tunnel after another; all

leading to dead ends and fissures small enough that wouldn't allow passage.

On top of that, he was still being followed. The occasional scuttle of a rock, a whispered command, an unexplained movement, were all telltale signs of unseen company. Finally he stopped and with a deep sigh, turned and spoke to the area behind him. "You might as well come out, I know you're there."

Three wizards in long black robes suddenly appeared in front of him. He knew each one of them. "Zacharias Smith, why am I not surprised, Malcolm Baddock, and..." Harry paused and his eyes widened. "...Ernie MacMillan, now I am surprised."

"Glad I could provide at least a little entertainment for you, Potter; your wand please."

Harry chuckled easily. "Just like that Ernie? No duel so that you can say that you beat the Boy-Who-Lived? No showing of bravado? Come now, Ernie, you disappoint me."

Ernie laughed. "Now, Harry, I am smart enough to know that you aren't going to try anything when you know that we are holding your family hostage."

"Gee, Ernie, you take all the fun out of being taken captive." Harry handed his wand over to his captor. Ernie stepped back. "Please, continue on your way. Don't let us hinder your progress."

"I don't suppose that you would be so kind as to point out the correct direction, would you, Ernie?"

"And why would I do that, Potter? We are having entirely too much fun, watching you wander around like a little lost puppy."

Harry chuckled humorlessly. "Well, I'm fairly certain that your master is chomping at the bit to get his hands on me. It would speed things up."

Baddock narrowed his eyes. "I wouldn't be in too big of a hurry if I were you, Potter. What he has in mind for you isn't – pleasant."

Harry shrugged nonchalantly. "I'm smart enough to figure that out, all on my own, Baddock. However, the maniac has my family; so if you would be so kind...." He let the sentence hang and the three men in front of him looked back at him, any action on their part, non-existent.

Harry sighed in frustration. "Look, Smith, you've wanted a piece of me for years, ever since we started the DA. Well, now's your chance. Let's get to it shall we?"

"Very well, Potter." He indicated the direction from which they had just come. "At the end of the tunnel, turn right."

Harry followed their instructions quickly. He turned his back on his captors, knowing he was safe enough, at least until he reached his destination. None of them spoke as they continued the journey.

The tunnel emptied into a cavernous, somewhat circular room; directly in the center of the room, stood Lucius Malfoy. The sunlight streamed down through a fissure in the rock above, making it appear as if he had a spotlight on him. Lucius was surrounded by about fifty other robed men and women in a tight circle. Harry snorted with ill-disguised disgust at the scene. "You always were into theatrics, Lucius."

Baddock cuffed him on the side of the head. "Speak only when given permission to do so, Potter."

Harry's three escorts directed him to the middle of the circle, standing him directly in front of Lucius Malfoy. They bowed and whispered, "Milord," and quickly took their places to complete the circle. Before he took his place, however, Ernie handed Lucius the wand he had confiscated from Harry.

Harry raised an eyebrow, and smirked. "Milord? Am I to believe that YOU are the new Dark Lord, Lucius?"

The man sneered at his prisoner. "Your ill-timed bravado will not help you here, Potter. That fool, Dumbledore, is not here to protect you this time."

Harry looked around. "So, what are you going to do now Lucius, offer me to the volcano god as a sacrifice? Or perhaps you will lay me out on a slab and cut out my beating heart."

Lucius approached his quarry slowly and backhanded him, bloodying his lip, then sneered in his face. "Potter, I wouldn't give me ideas if I were you. You will not survive this time, but the manner of your death will be totally dictated by you. I can make it quick, or very, very slow..." Lucius shrugged then turned away. "...in any case, Potter," He turned with his arms spread, "These walls are the last that you will see."

Harry's eyes narrowed. He was tired of the cat and mouse game that Lucius was trying to play. "Where is my family, Lucius?"

"Safe..." Then he shrugged again, "...for the time being. It all depends on your behavior."

"I want to see them."

"Yes, I suppose that you do. I also supposed that it would be too much for me to expect you to just believe me when I say they are safe. If I allow you a glimpse of them, what will you give me? A finger? An arm? What will you pay with, Mr. Potter?"

"I suppose you'll tell me that when the time comes; my family, Lucius!"

Lucius nodded, "Very well," He then turned to a figure in the circle. "Bring the boy."

Harry's eyes narrowed. "No, both of them!"

The older man looked with delight at his captive. "That will cost you more, Mr. Potter."

Harry ground out through his teeth. "Both of them, Malfoy!"

"Well, it seems that my little mouse is losing his patience. How delightful." He nodded with a smirk. "As you wish." Lucius turned to

yet another robed figure, “Well, you heard him, bring them both, but keep them over there. We can’t let them get too close, now can we.”

After what seemed like an eternity but in reality was only a few moments, Harry heard Ginny’s voice and smiled. “Get your slimy paws off me you cretin. Miki come here.”

After a moment, the two struggling figures were shoved roughly to the ground and Ginny gave them a feral growl and gathered Miki into her. She looked up and glared at Lucius, then her eyes widened when she saw Harry.

He saw her lips form the word, “No!”

Harry’s heart was breaking, he mouthed, “I’m sorry,” then looked to his son. The sorrow in his little boy’s voice nearly tore him apart. “Daddy!”

Harry’s gaze returned to Ginny’s face. “Are you OK? Have they hurt you?”

Ginny shook her head. “Nothing we can’t handle. We’re all right.”

At a nod from the Lucius, the Death Eater grabbed both of them to return them to where they were being held. Harry realized that this may be his last chance and called out, “I love you both!”

Harry closed his eyes and took a deep breath, then turned to face Lucius. “Let them go! You have me. They are useless to you now.”

“Useless? Oh I hardly think so, Mr. Potter. As long as I have them, I can easily force you to do anything that I want you to; anything like —” he pretended to think, then smiled at his captive, “—get down on your knees before me and kiss the hem of my robes.” His voice was oily and dripped with false sympathy.

Harry closed his eyes, feeling every bit of the humiliation that Malfoy intended him to experience, then knelt in front of Lucius, picked up the hem of his robes and kissed them. Lucius kicked him in the face and sent him flying.

Blood streamed from Harry's nose as he slowly stood to face his rival. He wiped the blood on the sleeve of his shirt and looked back at Lucius in defiance.

The blond seemed to study his fingernails. "You weren't sincere enough for my liking, scum. Nott, Avery, take our guest to his suite if you please."

The two grabbed Harry's arms and started off with him but Lucius called them back. "He appears to be a bit warm, gentlemen, help cool him off a bit."

Harry sneered at Lucius. "You aren't half the wizard Voldemort was; and I defeated him. What do you think your chances are?"

Lucius lifted an eyebrow. "You forget yourself. You are going to make this very enjoyable – for me that is. Your reactions are directly in line with the treatment your family will receive. You, Mr. Potter, have just earned your son a punishment."

Harry fought against the hands that held him fast. Lucius only laughed. "You will soon learn, Mr. Potter, that I am not a very forgiving man." The new Dark Lord snapped at his minions. "Take him! And bring me the boy."

Harry began to struggle. "No, no Lucius, take me instead. NO!"

Lucius Malfoy circled his captive and sneered. "Not this time, Potter. You need to be taught a lesson. Your disgusting habit of self-sacrifice will not help you here. If you disobey me, if you are cheeky with me, your little family will pay the price."

They had to drag Harry away as he struggled and screamed for his son.

Rough hands stripped him of his clothing as he tried desperately to get away. They only laughed and pushed him over to a large rock and magically manacled him. Then they cast a charm on the enclosed area that instantly cooled the air to an uncomfortable temperature before leaving him naked, shivering and frantic.

He could hear his little boy screaming and crying for his daddy. Harry struggled against the restraints until his wrists and ankles were bloody and mangled. He attempted to use wandless magic to break his bonds, but nothing he tried seemed to work. Then he sat there, despondent with a sorrow so deep that he couldn't even express it in tears. He was acutely aware of when the screams ended, and he wondered if Mikeal were even still alive.

Then there was nothing. No people, no sound, no movement of any kind. There was only the pungent smell of sulfur, uncomfortable cold and the gnawing fear that his family was dead. He counted the journey of the sunlight leaking through the fissure seven times before he saw anyone again. The only comfort he had was a small bucket of water that he drank sparingly from.

He slept only in fits and starts, but when he did, he heard Lucius saying, 'bring me the boy.'

He was so lost in his worry that he didn't even respond when at long last the scrape of metal against metal reverberated through the cell.

"Stand up!"

He sat, staring at nothing, lost in his fears.

"Did you hear me, Potter? I said stand up!"

Harry dragged himself up to a standing position. He looked at his jailer and managed to croak out, "My family?"

The man cuffed him. "Speak only when commanded to." The man pushed him to the ground. "Crawl to your betters, you animal."

Harry was forced to crawl on his hands and knees to another chamber in the volcano. A disembodied voice instructed him to sit in a chair and he found himself staring at bright lights. The voice seemed to fill the room. "The rules here are very simple, Prisoner. Do as you are told and you will be rewarded, disobey and you will be punished,"

Harry's voice was as raspy as dry leaves. "My family?"

“You have no family. There is no one who loves you.”

He nodded his head. “Yes, Ginny, Miki.” All he knew was that he had to make the voice understand.

“You have no family. What is your name?”

“I have a family. I have a wife and a son, and my name is Harry Potter.”

“Your name is not Harry Potter. What is your name?”

“So you’ve decided that I am to be brainwashed? It won’t work. My name is Harry Potter.” His voice was weak from lack of use, but he felt it getting stronger along with his anger.

“No, you are confused. Your name is not Harry Potter. What is your name?” The voice was monotoned. Neither raising, or lowering in pitch, showing no emotion of any kind.

Harry was agitated and fought against the binds that held him to the chair, MY NAME IS HARRY POTTER!”

“There is no Harry Potter. Your name is Prisoner. Harry Potter is dead.”

Harry heard the voice make a command. “Bring me the girl.”

Harry groaned. “No, Ginny.”

“What is your name?”

“Harry P...”

“Think about it carefully, Prisoner. What is your name?”

His voice was barely a whisper. “Harry Potter.”

“Why do you persist in the falsehood, Prisoner? What is your name?”

He looked directly where he thought the voice was coming from, determination shining in his eyes, "Harry Potter, Harry Potter, Harry Potter!"

The voice paused before stating "Your wife will be punished, Harry Potter, if that is truly who you are."

"I am Harry Potter, I can't change that. Are you so unimaginative, that you can't see that?"

"Oh, but you can change it; very easily in fact. You do not deserve a name. You are an animal."

Harry rolled his eyes. "Even animals have names."

"Are you an animal?"

"No, I am not. I mean look at me. Even an animal is given food and water. Even an animal is allowed the dignity of the covering of fur. But then, I am not even allowed that. An animal would be beneath your notice, yet here we are; all of your focus and time devoted to me. I am someone you are trying to humiliate into submission. I am someone worthy of your time. So to answer your question, No, I am not an animal. That fact is proved by my very situation. I am Harry Potter."

"You are not Harry Potter. You are 'Prisoner'. Are you hungry Prisoner?"

Harry shook his head. "No, I am thirsty."

"Tell me who you are and you will drink your fill. What is your name?"

Harry smirked. "My name is Harry Potter."

Harry then heard Ginny's voice. "Prisoner, tell them your name. Please. Tell them. They are hurting me."

"You see, your wife is angry at you. She knows who you are. Why do you not know? You are Prisoner."

“Ginny is not angry. In fact, that is not even Ginny. She would never say those things to me. I. AM. HARRY. POTTER!” He strained against the binds of the chair trying to loosen the magical binds holding him in place.

He heard Ginny scream and he strained harder. Then there was silence. Silence so loud that he thought it would deafen him.

It was dark, quiet and still. Harry tried desperately to break the magical bonds holding him to the chair. Nothing he tried work. There he sat. Again no one spoke. No one came near him. There was no movement, no sound and no explanation.

He sat, manacled to the chair. He put his head back against the chair and fell asleep out of pure exhaustion.

He would wake, strain against the magic holding him and feel his soul scream out in utter frustration. Occasionally, he would wake to find one arm loose and a single glass of water in easy reach.

He wanted to ignore the offering, but self-preservation won out. He drank it slowly, enjoying the limited freedom. As soon as the glass was empty, the magical bonds would activate again and once again he would not be able to move.

Time ceased to exist. He ached. He worried about Ginny and Mikeal. He slept fitfully. There was no way to measure the passage of days and he had no way of knowing how much time had passed. He almost wished that they would torture him. This was inhumane. To be left alone with all his fears, and concerns was worse than physical torture.

Then at long last, it came. “Wake up, Prisoner.”

Harry’s head snapped up.

“There is someone here to see you.”

A woman was pushed in front of him and she laid her head at his feet. Her veil of red hair hid her face. But he knew.

His voice came in a whisper. "Ginny. Ginny talk to me."

He watched her look up at him through a curtain of dirty red hair. She sneered at him. "They killed Mikeal. They killed Mikeal because you wouldn't say what they wanted you to say. What is your name?"

"Why are you doing this, Ginny?"

"It's your fault he is dead. You killed my baby."

"Mikeal, dead?"

"Yes, Mikeal is dead. What is your name?"

"Mikeal can't be dead."

"Oh, but he can be and is, Prisoner. He was killed to punish you. You didn't co-operate."

Harry shook his head, refusing to believe. "I'm thirsty."

"What is your name?"

"Harry Potter."

On and on it went, Ginny trying to break down his resistance; Harry fighting for everything he was worth against it.

Ginny looked up at Harry, "Harry, they've killed Miki. They took him from me. They hurt him. They hurt him. YOU KILLED HIM. ALL YOU HAD TO DO WAS CHANGE YOUR NAME."

"Ginny?"

"YOU KILLED HIM!" The door opened again and she was dragged out screaming obscenities at her husband.

Then it was quiet. The lights went out. There was not a sound except for Harry's heavy breathing. He hung forward, still strapped to the chair. Harry screamed after her, "GINNY, I DIDN'T KILL HIM. I didn't."

Then the voice was back. "But you did kill him, Prisoner. You killed your son. Will you kill your wife as well? What is your name?"

He was quiet for a long while before he answered, "Harry Pris...Potter."

The lights went on again. The lights were so bright that he tried to turn his face away, but the restraints wouldn't allow that much movement. Once his eyes adjusted, he saw in front of him, a glass of water.

"Do you want this water, Prisoner?"

Harry did not answer. He stared at the floor and concentrated on his breathing; in, out, in out, in, out.

"Prisoner, answer. Do you want this water?"

His voice was quiet and broken. "Yes."

"What is your name?"

Harry leaned his head back against the chair. He was tired; so tired; and thirsty. All he had to do was answer the way they wanted. What did it matter anyway? He knew who he was. "I am Ha...I am Pri..." His head lolled on his shoulders. He thought of Ginny. He thought of Miki. He knew; he just knew that Miki had to be alright. And he knew that the people he loved the most were depending on him.

Then there was Draco. Draco was getting Dumbledore. Draco was bringing help. Where in Merlin's name was he anyway. Harry thought, 'If I ever get out of here, I will kill him with my bare hands.'

He reached deep inside himself for strength. He pictured his Ginny. Her red hair flying and her eyes sparkling with a smile that lit up her face. Then there was Miki. What had they said? Had he really killed him? No, that's impossible. He knew he couldn't do that. He knew that in his heart; but Ginny said that Miki was dead. He shook his head to clear it. "No."

Confusion and disorientation was settling in. He couldn't remember even being anywhere near Miki. "But Ginny said..."

"What is your name?"

He whispered, "What?"

"What is your name?"

Completely ignoring the voice, he thought; the water, and his exhaustion forgotten. He opened his eyes and said with as much conviction as he could muster, "My. Name. Is. Harry. James. Potter!"

"I'm sorry that you believe that, Prisoner. You must learn not to lie to yourself. I'm afraid that we are going to have to punish you for lying, Prisoner." Two wizards that Harry had never seen before came into the room and loosened the magical binds that held him to the chair.

In a swift movement, Harry was jerked up by his wrists and suspended from the low ceiling; the tips of his toes barely scraping the floor. A bright light seemed to be directed into his eyes. He had to turn his head to avoid the blinding beams.

He hung there for a short time before he heard a noise. It started low; just barely audible but grew in volume until Harry knew just exactly what he was being forced to listen to. Ginny's agonized screams, begging some unknown assailant to please stop, tore at his sanity.

After hours of attack, Harry was screaming. "Please stop, don't hurt her. Please..."

Then there was silence; a silence so thick that it was like a living entity. The bright light was gone as well leaving normal illumination in its wake.

For the first time, Harry could see that he was in a room. The realization that he was no longer in the volcanic cave registered immediately.

With a sigh, he realized that, that would explain why Draco hadn't come with help yet. They didn't have any idea where he was being held. In fact, Harry knew that he could be anywhere in the world.

He had no idea how long he hung there. His arms felt as if they were being torn out of their sockets.

After what seemed to be weeks, he spotted a ghostly figure. He wasn't quite sure what it was. It was only a mist, shapeless with no definition. It moved with purpose of direction, directly to him. Harry looked down and smiled slightly. The mist turned out to be a wolf. A wolf that circled him and wrapped itself briefly around Harry's feet and ankles.

A feeling of comfort seemed to radiate from the vision through Harry's entire body. Harry smiled and whispered only one word. "Miki!"

Chapter 27 - The Search

"What in the bloody hell do you mean, Ginny? Lucius has taken Harry?"

Frustration, fury and fear tainted her voice. "What in the bloody hell do you think I mean, Ron. Lucius Malfoy left a note and a Port Key. Draco found it. Both he and Harry were under the impression that Miki and I had been taken. Harry turned himself over to that monster to get to us!" Ginny broke down and cried.

A grim determination appeared on Ron's face. "We'll be there as soon as we can get there, Gin."

"I need mum, Ron."

"She'll be there too, Gin. Hang in there. Is Miki all right?"

"Yes. He's scared for his daddy; but he is here with me."

"Don't leave the Manor, Gin. Is Draco around?"

"No, he's trying to find out where his father is. Moira is here with me."

"Good, tell her not to leave either. It wouldn't do to have one of you go missing. It will be fine, Ginny. We will find him."

"Thank you; and Ron, please hurry."

She pulled her head out of the fireplace and began to pace. She looked down at Miki, who was staring off into space and mumbling to himself again. His face looked almost vacant.

"Who are you talking to son?"

"Wolf."

"Can he show you where daddy is, baby?"

He was quiet for a long while; his lips moved in rapid motion. "I'll be back, mum. He's gonna show me."

“Be careful, Miki.”

Ginny sat behind him so that she could cradle Mikeal's body as it went limp. Ginny hated that that always happened to him. She watched him, held him and absently brushed his hair away from his face.

Fifteen minutes later, Ginny felt life shutter back into his little body. He looked up at Ginny with tears in his eyes. “Daddy is real sick, mum. He doesn't got any clothes on. He is so cold. They won't let him sleep. They keep telling him his name is Pris'ner not Harry. They telled him I was dead.”

Ginny tried to get herself under control by taking a few deep breaths. “OK, Mikeal, now this is very important. Could you recognize where daddy is?”

He started to cry in earnest and shook his head. “Only caves, mum. Wolf stayed with him. I told daddy to stay out of the cave, mum. Why didn't he listen to me?”

“Because baby, he thought we were in trouble. Daddy loves us so much, that he would do anything to protect us.”

Miki nodded his head and crawled up into her lap. “I'm scared, mum.”

She hugged him. “Me too, baby.”

A half-hour later, the entire Weasley family stepped one at a time from the fire place. Molly ran over to her. “Oh, Ginny,” she threw her arms around her daughter and kissed her forehead. Ginny broke down and cried.

George sat down next to Mikeal. “Hey there chappie, you doing OK?”

“Daddy is hurt, Uncle George.”

“I know, mate. But we are going to find him. Don't you worry.” Mikeal crawled up into his lap, put his fingers in his mouth and put his head against George's chest.

“Where is Professor Dumbledore,” Arthur asked?

“Draco, went to find him, daddy, but I’m afraid for him too.”

Moira handed Ginny a cup of tea. “I feel so useless, Gin. It was all I could think...” But she broke down and cried into her hands.

“Moira, I’m certain that Draco is alright. He is trying to help, Harry. You’ll see. He’ll just come strolling back here any time now.”

Ginny turned to her family and filled them in on everything that Mikeal had said and you could have heard a pin drop. George looked at Mikeal. “Hey, mate, you like to draw don’t you?”

Mikeal nodded his head.

George conjured a pad of paper and some pencils. “Here ya go, chappie, can you draw a picture of where daddy is?”

The whole room looked at George with ‘why didn’t I think of that’ looks.

Mikeal started drawing. After he worked for a while he looked at George. “Uncle George, see, its gots trees on this side and a street goin’ up a mount’in. It’s a big cave, but ya gots ta walk a long way to get to the big room. There’s holes in the ceilin’ that let sun in, but daddy is away from the sun. He’s cold Uncle George, he needs a blanket.”

The little boy’s eyes brightened with tears and buried his face in George’s shoulder.

George looked at his sister. “Gin, is there someone local that might know the area well enough to at least guess where we can begin looking?”

Ginny thought for a long moment then smiled. “Mrs. Lee; and she would do anything for Harry. She has practically adopted him as her own.”

“Gin, we also need to inform the Auror’s”

Ginny shook her head. "No, they have no jurisdiction here. We need to get the Special Forces involved. Daddy, can you do that? Can you contact Tad Mahelcic in New York and get some help here please?"

"Of course, darling."

George handed Miki to Molly. "In the mean time, we should go and talk to this Mrs. Lee. Let's go!"

They took the pictures that Mikeal drew and went to the home.

Mrs. Lee was pacing her office. She knew that something was wrong. Harry hadn't shown up and nothing short of dire emergency would stop him from being there, and she knew that. So when Ginny knocked on the door she was not surprised.

She said only "Sit," by way of greeting. "What has happened?"

Ginny and George looked at her, "You knew?"

"I know only that there is something, fill me in."

"Mrs. Lee, this is my brother, George. He's helping me."

"It's nice to meet you, young man."

Quickly George nodded, then explained as vaguely as he could about wanting to find the particular area that Mikeal had drawn out for them."

Mrs. Lee was quiet for a moment, and then looked at her two guests. "Mikeal told me you know."

"Told you?" Ginny squeaked."

"So let's stop beating around the bush and get to the crux of the matter, shall we?"

George held up a hand. "Wait, what exactly did Mikeal tell you, Mrs. Lee?"

“Everything, George. That Harry and Ginny are magical, that he has spirit guides, that Harry takes him for rides on a broom,” with that one she paused and looked at Ginny in question. When Ginny nodded her head, she continued, “and that Draco and Moira are similarly blessed.

George smiled. “And, you are OK with all this, Mrs. Lee?”

“Young man, I am Hawaiian, my life revolves around such things. Of course I am OK with all this. And even if I wasn’t, I know Harry. He is a good man. He needs help. And if I find the haoles that have attacked him, I will personally tear them limb from limb.”

George smiled at Ginny. “Lucius won’t know what hit him.”

Mrs. Lee left instructions with the employees and left with George and Ginny within a matter of moments. They first headed to the Geological Surveyor’s Office. A man, maybe a little older than Harry, looked up from his desk. “Mrs. Lee! What brings you here?”

“Hello, Meliek,” she smiled at him. “How is my favorite boy?”

He came around the counter and gave Mrs. Lee a kiss on the cheek. “As good as always, Mrs. Lee. What brings you here today?”

“Meliek, there is a young man in trouble...”

Within a half-hour, they were studying different volcanic caverns in the whole of the islands. There were pictures, maps, and seismic recordings of volcanic activity.

“I would imagine,” said Meliek, “that it would have to be an inactive volcano. If it were still active, the gasses would make it impossible to inhabit. Who is this haole again?”

“Mrs. Lee smiled. “Ahh, a haole maybe, Meliek, but with the soul of a Hawaiian. He is my friend, Meliek, my grandson.”

After two hours, they had narrowed it down to ten possibilities; but as Meliek pointed out, ten was better than 100.

The three left and went to the Manor. Mrs. Lee asked Ginny to stop at the gates and performed a short ritual before she would enter the grounds. When they looked questioningly at her, she explained that she knew that the house was haunted and she was paying respects to the dead. Ginny hugged her after they pulled to the front of the house.

George put an arm around her shoulder and squeezed. "You are quite the Muggle, Mrs. Lee."

"Muggle?"

"Non-magical folk."

She looked insulted. "And just who told you that I was non-magical, young man?"

Both Ginny and George turned and looked at her. "Are you a witch then?"

"I don't know so much about being a witch, but I have a fair bit of magic in my blood. Don't ever assume anything you two. How do you think that Mikeal knew he could talk to me about everything?"

Ginny stammered. "Well, we just assumed that he was being five."

"We can talk about this later, let's find my Harry." She walked into the Manor and was followed by the two stunned siblings.

Miki was sitting on the floor in the kitchen lips moving furiously. Ginny touched his shoulder. "Come here, love."

He had tears in his eyes. "Mum, wolf came back. I told him to stay and protect daddy, but he came back."

"All right love, we are going to do something right now. Mrs. Lee, will you fill everyone in on what we found out. George, you come with me."

George, Ginny and Miki went to the library. She walked in and closed the door, she called for the resident ghost. "Laird Tavish? Can you hear me please?"

After only a moment, the ghost popped his head out of the stone above the fireplace, "Aye lassie."

"Tavish, we are in desperate need of your help. You see, Harry has been taken against his will, and we need help getting him back. Do you travel beyond these walls?"

"Taken ye say, agin' his will? Aye, th' Dragoon's be at work on th' island. But nay, lassie, I can'na leave these walls."

Tavish floated down to Mikeal. "Laddie, be ye up fer pla'in our game?"

George looked curiously at the ghost. "What kind of game do you play?"

Miki looked at him. "We play capture the evil dragon. Lady Rebekkah plays too. Laird Tavish captures her and I have to find 'em.

Tavish looked pointedly at Ginny. "Aye, Th' town's people don' noo' th't the *Dragon* be evil. Oonly th' bonnie Prince Charlie here, knows and slays the evil beast."

Ginny looked at her son, Miki, do you think that you can go to daddy again?

"Yes, mum."

"Good, ask wolf to show you important things like rocks, flowers, ponds, waterfalls etc. Can you do that?"

"Yes, mum." He sat on the floor and closed his eyes and began to talk to the being that only he could see.

George held him this time. Ginny paced the room and Tavish floated down to her and gave her a meaningful look and followed as she paced, saying nothing.

She turned and stared at the ghost. "Tavish, this game that you've been playing with Miki...is it important?"

He smiled, almost with relief. "Aye, Lassie; but I daren't say moor'."

She wandered around the room seemingly lost in thought; mumbling to herself as she went. After a while she turned to her brother. "George, has anyone heard from Draco lately?"

"Not as far as I know. He's been searching for Dumbledore."

"It's not like Dumbledore to be gone from Hogwarts for any length of time, is it?"

"Well, Gin, it is summer hols."

Then dawning hit, her head bolted up and looked at the ghost. "You've been trying to tell me all this time, haven't you?"

The ghost only smiled.

"I wish I could kiss you, Tavish."

"Mum, Wolf brought a Eagle with him this time. He showed me what it looked like from the sky. There's a river what goes all the way 'round almos'. And there was ladies at the beach having a party.

Ginny paced. "A party? A Party, George, a luau at the beach, at the base of the mountain that has a river going around it."

George jumped up. "I'm on it."

"Miki, did you see daddy again?"

He only nodded. "He saw me mum. Daddy saw me. Only it wasn't me and it made him cry. He saw you too. You told him things that wasn't true. You told him that he killed me."

She threw her arms around her son. "Oh, Miki, none of that is true, you know. That's just people dressed up like you and me so they can hurt daddy. Do you understand?"

“Yes, mum, that’s what wolf says.”

Wolf is very wise, son, you would do well to listen to him. Now, you know what I want you to do? I want you to play with Uncle George and keep him out of trouble. He has such a hard time doing that you know.”

He nodded sadly, and turned toward the door then stopped. “Oh, mum, wolf says to tell you...” He concentrated, trying to remember the exact words that his guide had told him to relay, “...three are there but not seen.

“Thank you, baby.” She caressed his face, then he left the room. Then she turned toward the ghost. “Thank you, Tavish.”

Chapter 28 – “YOU”

“Prisoner.”

Harry’s head snapped up. “My name is Harry Potter.”

“Do you want to drink, Prisoner?”

Harry nodded but didn’t say anything.

Suddenly the binds that had been holding him suspended, released him and he fell to the cold floor.

“The water is there, Prisoner. Take it. Drink.

Harry didn’t have the strength to stand, so he crawled to the table and pulled himself up using the table leg and grabbed the glass; with shaking hands lifted it to his mouth. It was only water, but to him it was nectar. It soothed his parched throat and moistened his cracked lips.

He pulled himself up to a standing position and held onto the table for support. “C...Cold.”

“Are you cold, Prisoner?”

Harry nodded his head.

“There is a blanket on the table.” As Harry watched, a blanket appeared; but as he reached for it the voice spoke again, “What is your name, Prisoner?”

His hand hovered over the blanket. He decided to ignore the voice and reached for the blanket again. A shock went through his hand and up his arm, and in his body’s weakened condition, the pain was excruciating.

“Ahhhh,” he fell to the floor and lay there panting. “What is your name?”

He pushed himself up from the cold metallic floor and pulled himself to a standing position, and gasped, “My name is, Harry Potter.”

The light went on again and Harry lifted his arm to his face and turned away from the brightness.

“Is it dark, Prisoner?”

“No.”

“It is, it is dark.”

“No, its light.”

“You are mistaken, Prisoner. Look closely, it is dark.”

Harry studied the light for a moment, and then shook his head.

He dropped to the cold floor. Harry sat, freezing, unable to move, unable to think, barely able to breathe. Out of the corner of his eye he caught a movement and painfully turned his head to see it.

Then he looked closer. It was Miki, but not Miki. A ghosting form reached for him and touched his cheek. The form crawled up into Harry's lap and wrapped misty arms around him. Harry suddenly felt warmth that he hadn't felt in he didn't know how long.

When the vision left, he struggled to stand, walked to the chair, laid his head against the back, and passed out. He didn't notice when the magical binds activated again.

It seemed he had only been asleep for moments when he was suddenly brought back to reality with a bucket of water thrown at him. The water traced icy fingers down his naked torso and onto his legs. He shivered uncontrollably, but not a word escaped his lips.

He heard a scraping and looked up as Lucius Malfoy and a cloaked Death Eater strolled into the room.

“Are you enjoying your stay here, Prisoner?”

“My name is...”

“Yes, yes, yes, we know all about that. I bring you a treat today. You've been here for four weeks now, Prisoner. I thought that it was

about time that you met the person that is responsible for your being here.

Harry's eyes narrowed and his attention was more focused. "You are, Lucius."

"No, Prisoner, as much as I would like to take credit for that incredible feat, I can't. But this man can."

The dark hooded figure slowly turned and lowered his hood.

Harry's eyes got wide as he stared at the figure in front of him. Then they narrowed as he realized that this was not some trick of his mind. He was really standing there, taking credit for everything.

It came out in a croaked sneer. "YOU!"

Chapter 29 – My Name is Harry Potter

Ginny sat at the kitchen table, a cooling cup of tea at her elbow. Molly hovered nearby, but Ginny generally ignored her.

The family had gone out with Mrs. Lee to try to verify the place where they thought Harry was. Ginny had given them Miki's warning before they left. "There are three wizards in invisibility cloaks outside the entrance of the cave. Be careful."

An hour later, the family was back. "It was the wrong place. Sorry, Gin."

She nodded with a worried sigh. "You guys need to go lay down. You've been at this for a long time. You all look dead on your feet. When we find Harry, I will need you to be strong."

No one could really argue with that, but Ron sat down next to his sister. "What about you, Gin?"

Ginny waited for her family to leave the kitchen, then she looked at her closest brother, "Ron, do you love Harry?"

Ron hung his head. The question caught him off guard and took a minute to get himself under control. The subject of what he did to Harry was always a difficult one to deal with. "Ginny, I suffer more everyday because of what I did to him. Yes, I do love him, but I don't think that he will ever forgive me. If the situation were reversed, I wouldn't."

"He is a remarkable man, Ron. He does things that no normal person does; he thinks in a way that no normal person thinks. He has a view of the world that is full of trust and love; even now, after everything he has been through in his life. And when that trust is shaken, he may be tainted by it for a while, but he comes out of it with more determination, that the world is inherently good and people, when given a chance, can change. I have never seen any different attitude in him, except when he was fighting Voldemort."

"He sometimes trusts, where he shouldn't and gets hurt in the process. But this time it will be different. When Harry gets back, I will

protect him with all that is in me. Forgiveness will not be an option. When he gets back from where ever he is, he will need your strength and protection as well.

Ron looked at her. "You know something."

She nodded her head.

"Tell me."

"I can't, not yet. But you will know when it is time, and Harry will need you more than he ever has before."

&

"YOU? You did this to me?"

He laughed. "I told you, Potter, back in 5th year, that you would pay for putting my father in Azkaban. Did you really think that I had forgotten?" Draco Malfoy paced in front of a bound Harry Potter, his wizarding robes billowing with the movement.

The blond laughed. "My father told me that revenge is best when served cold..." He leaned down into Harry's face and whispered as he patted his cheek, "...he was right."

"A lot of planning went into this little charade, Potter. I joined the side of light. I went through Auror training. I followed you to Hawaii. I offered the poor suffering Boy-Who-Lived my hand in friendship. Everything; I planned it all. You made it so easy, Potter. You took a viper into your hearth and home and got bitten.

Harry lifted one corner of his mouth and looked defiantly up at Draco.

For a moment, Draco was shaken by the confidence he saw in his quarry. "What?"

Harry raised an eyebrow, settled back in the chair, and looked straight ahead. His voice was strong, defiant and a little belligerent; "My name is, Harry Potter. You played the 'Draco' card a little too

soon Lucius. You will not break me. I know now that my family is safe.”

Neither Malfoy spoke for a few moments. Then Lucius walked forward. “So be it, Potter. Crucio!”

Pain, beyond, pain. Agony, beyond, agony. His screams echoed off the walls and bounced back, reverberating and meeting again in the middle.

Lucius lifted his wand, leaving Harry panting. “What is your name?”

Gasping, Harry closed his eyes, “Harry...”

“Crucio.”

He writhed in the chair, but this time determined that he would not give them the satisfaction of hearing him break down again. When it was lifted, his entire body spasmed in the after-shock. His arms and legs twitched uncontrollably; his head jerked upon his neck and he moaned quietly.

“What is your name?”

He refused to answer. He stared defiantly at them.

“Imperio.”

Harry felt blessed oblivion take over. His mind was free.

“Tell me your name, Prisoner.”

“My name?”

“Yes, what is your name?”

“It’s Harry...”

“No, it’s prisoner! What is your name?”

“You want me to say Prisoner, but it is Harry Potter.”

“Crucio.”

Again, wave upon wave upon wave of unbearable pain ripped its way through his body; and it never seemed to stop. This time he screamed again, making Draco chuckle.

The binds on the chair cut into his wrists and ankles from the strain that he put on them while under the influence of the Cruciatus Curse. They bled freely coating the arms and the floor with small pools.

They left him gasping and wheezing and to his horror, crying.

Then he passed out.

“Harry? Harry? Wake up love.”

Harry felt a gentle hand caress his cheek and he forced his eyes open and his eyes fell on his wife. “Gin?”

“Yes, love. Here, take a drink.”

She held a cup to his lips and helped him drink.

“Are you hungry?”

He nodded his head and she waved her wand and released him from the bonds that held him and handed him a piece of bread.

He stuffed it into his mouth and chewed as if it were a feast.

“Water.”

She held the cup to his lips again.

“Are you cold, love?”

He nodded.

She wrapped a blanket around his naked form and his eyes closed in ecstasy. “Ginny, we have to get out of here.”

“All in good time. What is your name?”

He looked at her in confusion.

“What is your name?”

“Harry Potter.”

Ginny pulled out her wand. “Crucio.”

Harry screamed. The betrayal he felt was more painful than the curse. When Ginny lifted the curse, Harry started mumbling to himself before he lost consciousness.

Chapter 30 - Discovery

Ginny and Ron sat in silence, waiting, waiting. Then she heard it, the opening and closing of the front doors. She slowly stood and looked at her brother and nodded. With a deep breath to steal herself, she made her way out of the kitchen and to the front foyer.

“Hello, Draco, did you find Dumbledore? You’ve been gone so long. We haven’t heard from you for weeks. Moira is beside herself with worry.”

He shook his head, I’m sorry, Ginny. I can’t find that man anywhere. He probably already knows about Harry’s disappearance though. He seems to know everything.

Ginny’s voice was even and calm as she spoke. “Oh? Do you suppose that he knows that it was you who turned Harry over to your father?”

Draco stopped and looked at her. “What did you say?”

Out of the corner of her eye she saw Ron draw his wand. “Accio, wand.” Draco’s wand flew to his hand.

The blond looked at Weasley and snarled, and then he looked back at Ginny who had taken the opportunity to draw out her wand and trained it on him.

“Ginny, I...”

“Petrificus Totalus.”

He fell over and landed with a heavy thud onto his back. Ginny leaned over him with a feral smile. “Did you really think that I wouldn’t find out, Malfoy? Did you really think that I wouldn’t figure out what your little game was? You really do need to give me more credit.”

She turned to Ron. “I need Fred, Ron. Can you get him please?”

“Sure!” Ron ran from the room and quickly found Fred and filled him in on what had happened. “She needs you, downstairs.”

Ron and Fred ran, followed closely by George.

At the bottom of the steps, they saw Ginny standing over a petrified figure of Draco Malfoy.

The Weasley twins stared down at the Malfoy. Fred touched Ginny's arm. "You need me?"

"Yes, Fred do you happen to have any of those Truthful Tasties with you?"

"Sorry, sis. But I can floo the store and have them in a half hour."

"Do it. Oh, the Veritaserum that you use in them would be even better."

He nodded and ran from the room.

"Can you stand him up, Ron?"

"Sure."

Once that task was accomplished, Ginny circled the now petrified man. She pointed her wand at him, "Univer Cingo Strinxi,"

A rainbow of lighted ropes attached themselves to the figure in front of her then she tapped his head. "Finite!"

Immediately Malfoy started in, "Ginny, what in the bloody hell are you doing? Release me at once."

She laughed. "Harry taught me that little trick, Draco. Where's Harry?"

"How the bloody hell should I know, Ginny. You're upset. You don't know what you are doing."

"Oh, you know. In fact you were just with him, weren't you? You smell of ash...and what is that," she sniffed, "brimstone, how appropriate. It's clinging to your clothes. So, not an inactive volcano, as we thought; an active one with a warded chamber, I'll bet. I'll give you this Draco, it is an ingenious plan, so it couldn't have been yours, it is

Lucius'. How nice to know that you are still his lap dog. Where is Harry?"

Draco sighed and his shoulders slumped forward. "Probably dead by now. Lucius is a maniac."

Ginny smiled. "Nice try, Malfoy. But see, I know better. Where is my Harry?"

"I am not going to tell you, Ginny. I put my life on the line to keep you out of danger as it is. I'm not going to allow you to put yourself in the line of fire. Harry can handle himself."

Ron stepped up. "If you know what's good for you, Malfoy, you'll start spilling now."

"Oh, and the traitor speaks. You did almost more damage to him than I did. Congratulations, Weasel."

Ginny's eyes narrowed. "I'll give you one last chance, Malfoy. Where is Harry?"

He only shook his head.

"Very well, Malfoy. Crucio."

She held her wand on him as he screamed out his pain. People came running from all points of the Manor. Molly almost fainted, if Arthur hadn't been there to catch her, she would have hit the floor.

Bill touched her shoulder the anger evident in his voice. "Ginny, release him!"

She looked at her older brother then back at the blond writhing on the floor despite the binds that held him captive. Then she lifted her wand and nonchalantly walked toward the gasping body on the floor at her feet.

"I'll ask you again, Malfoy. "Where is my Harry?"

A thin line of blood trickled from his mouth as he looked up at her with fear and not a little respect.

She lowered the wand again and he saw it and cringed. “No, no, no...I’ll tell you. I’ll tell you. Damn Weasley, you’re vicious.”

Ginny straightened herself to her full height and sneered down at him with a look of disgust. “My name is, Genevra Molly POTTER! You mess with a Potter, you mess with death. It is about time that you and your useless father learned that. Now Malfoy...” her voice was quiet and deadly, “...where is my husband?”

He sighed and looked defeated. “He’s in a cavern, in the Kilauea Volcano.”

Ginny’s voice was deceptively smooth and light. “And, how do we get there?”

He sighed. “I’ll have to take you. You would never find it on your own.”

Ron looked murderous. “You expect us to untie you so that you can lead us into a trap?”

“I expect you to do what is best for Harry.”

At that moment, Fred re-appeared. “Ginny, here’s the Veritaserum.”

“Good, give it to him Fred.”

Fred nodded and Draco clamped his eyes and mouth shut as he fought, in vain, to avoid Fred.

Ginny tapped him on the forehead. “Malfoy, do you want some more? Open your mouth, NOW!”

He looked at the tip of her wand in fear and opened his mouth to Fred.

Fred put three drops on his tongue, and they waited.

Chapter 31 – The Breaking of a Hero

Harry lay flat on his back on the cold stone floor, barely conscious, and sang lightly to himself in a sing-songy voice.

Ginny pushed him with her foot. “Wake up, love.”

Harry groaned and rolled over onto his hands and knees and looked up at his wife. “Ginny, what did I do to you to deserve this.”

“You killed Miki. You are an animal. You are not worthy of a name. You are less than nothing. You do not exist.”

His weakened mind struggled against the confusion that Ginny created with her words. “But...you love me.”

“No, I hate you.”

“Ginny...”

“What is your name?”

“Ginny, please.”

She sneered at him. “You are worthless.”

Harry curled up into the fetal position, grabbed his knees and stared blankly at the far wall.

Ginny circled him and sneered down at him. “You are pathetic. What is your name?”

Harry answered nothing.

“What is your name?” She growled at him.

Ginny nudged him with her foot, but he shied away from her. “Don’t touch me.”

“What is your name?”

Then across the room, an opening of a door caught his attention. "Well, Mrs. Potter, how are you getting on with your husband?"

"He is useless." She sauntered toward the blond, making sure that she was in full view of her husband. "Maybe I should leave him for you, Lucius."

Lucius chuckled and caressed her cheek. "That is a definite possibility, my dear."

She walked across the room and nudged Harry again. When he didn't respond, she leaned close to him. "What is your name?"

Her breath had the slight fragrance of cabbages. He knew that that should be significant but couldn't remember why. Finally, he looked up at Ginny, the love of his life, his lifeline, and with tears in his eyes he finally answered her. His voice was a mere whisper. "My name is...Prisoner."

The lights went on, and she purred in his ear. "And, it is very dark."

He looked at the bright lights. "Yes, it is dark."

Having said that, his mind rebelled. Harry Potter passed out. They let him lay on the floor and he lost himself in nightmarish visions that ate away at his little remaining sanity. The dreams ran one into the other, each one more horrible than the one before. He relived Ginny putting the Cruciatus Curse on him time and time again. Images of Mikeal's lifeless body floated in and out of focus.

He awoke, screaming as if demon's attacked his mind. His mind resurrected Voldemort, and the snake like monster attacked over and over and beat him down a little at a time. One nightmare blended into another. He moaned as Draco turned into a dragon and devoured him whole. Confusing images that he couldn't decipher haunted his existence; he was never sure if he was awake or asleep. The only thing that he was aware of was the fact that he could not escape. He was trapped.

He crawled into a corner shaking with fear and cold. He was unable to remember who he was or how he ha gotten here. All he knew was

that he was more frightened than he could ever remember being; haunted by demons. Finally exhaustion took over and he surrendered to the disturbing images in his mind. He fell asleep, whimpering like a small child.

The nightmarish visions swept over him again. This time a woman that he didn't know was the cause of his pain. All he could remember about her was that she had red hair.

Then, he was being gently shaken awake. A man with long blonde hair had knelt down next to him. His warm hand was on his shoulder. The stranger's face showed incredible sympathy and caring toward him as he looked up into his eyes.

It took him a minute to focus on him and understand what he was saying. He couldn't hold his head up for very long and the voice faded in and out.

Harry looked dumbly at the man, his focus fading then he started rocking back and forth.

"Do you hear me, Prisoner?"

He stared at the man and when the words finally penetrated his befuddled mind, he looked up at him again with something akin to adulation.

"You will get on your knees, Prisoner, and you will call me, Master."

The authority in the man's tone frightened him. He struggled to his knees and kissed the hem of Lucius' robe, but he was relieved, because now he had some sort of direction. "What am I to do, Master?"

Lucius reached down, and almost gently, helped Prisoner to his feet. "I want you to sleep, Prisoner." Lucius called to an unseen body. "Get him cleaned up, feed him, give him clothes and let him sleep as long as he needs. Lucius wrapped a warm blanket around his naked body.

Prisoner looked up, into the face of his master, his features radiating gratefulness. As he huddled in the blanket's warmth, Harry's gaze

landed on one of the other people in the room. He knew a fury that he couldn't control. It was the woman with red hair.

Lucius followed Harry's line of vision and saw the fury in his eyes. Without a second thought, Lucius handed Prisoner his wand. "Prisoner...kill Ginny Potter."

He looked up at Lucius and down at the wand in his hand, then across at Ginny, who was looking horror stricken at Lucius.

Harry smirked at the woman, pointed the wand and yelled. "Avada Kadavra," Ginny was dead before she hit the floor. Harry walked over to the body and sneered down at it. Then he turned his back on the woman and let his master lead him from the room. He didn't spare a second thought for the redheaded woman.

Prisoner was shown to a comfortable room with a soft bed. He was given water to drink and food to eat. His exhaustion was such that he didn't eat. He was given a dreamless sleep potion and he staggered toward the bed and fell instantly asleep. Unseen hands covered his naked body with warm blankets. Exhaustion took its due and he slept for four days.

When he finally awoke, Prisoner didn't know where he was, except that he was no longer in a dark room. A little man in dark robes came in to show him to the bathroom. He was given access to a hot shower and clean clothes. He was sitting down to eat when Lucius entered the room. "Prisoner, may I join you?"

Prisoner immediately jumped up and got down on his knees. "You honor me, Master."

"Yes, I do, Prisoner. I would like to talk to you." Prisoner kept his eyes averted to avoid looking at his master. He did not want to show disrespect.

"Please, Prisoner, get up and continue eating. Your flesh is hanging off your bones. You do me a great dishonor by not taking care of yourself."

Prisoner hung his head in shame at the light scolding, but Lucius didn't seem to notice.

Prisoner, there are people who are looking for you, did you know?"

He gulped and looked up at the man. "For me, Master?" He was suddenly filled with panic. "No, who are they?" He looked frightened, and his eyes darted around expecting to see people coming out from hiding places.

Lucius took out pictures of people with red hair; they were scowling and mouthing what was obvious obscenities. "Do you know these people, Prisoner?"

Prisoner looked at the pictures and shook his head. "No, Master. They do look a bit like the woman that you asked me to kill."

"These are the people that are trying to kill you. They will try to take you from me. Do you want to leave me, prisoner?"

Prisoner looked up and his eyes widened in horror at the thought. "Master, No! I don't want to leave you. Master, you know that I live only to serve you. Will you let them take me?" His face was stricken and more than a little frightened.

Lucius reached over and patted his hand. "Of course not, Prisoner, of course not. Calm yourself. I need you. You are my most devoted servant. One day you will take my place."

Prisoner again, got down on his knees. "Oh, thank you, Master. I am yours."

Lucius smirked. "Yes, I know you are, Prisoner."

/N: Chapter 31 seems to have evoked some extreme emotion about what Harry would and wouldn't do in this situation. The fact is, when someone has been abused, tortured and brainwashed, this is exactly what would happen. I didn't write this portion without a lot of research into the subject. All I can tell you is that by the end of the fic, things are back where they should be. This entire story is a tribute to the human spirit and the strength that we all pull on in times of duress. If these things bother you, you might be better served to stop reading here. But if you decide to read through to the end, I promise that you won't be disappointed.

Chapter 32 – The Gift – See Author's Note

"Where is he, Malfoy?"

Draco looked around in horror. "They were here, I swear it. Evidently they left."

Ron held his wand up. "Where would they go, slime?"

"I don't know everything that my father plans, Weasley. If you don't believe me, use more of the Veritaserum, I'm telling you the truth."

Ginny looked like she was going to cry. "Ron, now what do we do?"

Malfoy snorted. "C'mon, Ginny, don't lose it now." He didn't get a chance to finish his statement as Ron laid him out.

There was a distant rumbling within the depths of the volcano and the smell of sulfur began to permeate the room. Ginny looked around, one last time, looking for some sign of Harry.

Ron put a hand on her shoulder. "Gin, we have to go. This thing could blow at anytime, and if not that, the gasses will kill us."

She looked at Malfoy's prone body, laying spread out on the cave floor. "What about him?"

"Couldn't we just leave him here?" Ron asked hopefully.

“No, Ron, we need him. We may have to trade him for Harry, or something.”

Another rumble ripped through the room and spurred the two to action. Ron heaved the smaller man onto his shoulder and they Apparated out of the cave.

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Two days later, Prisoner was pacing in his room. He had been afforded the particular honor of having a private room, but he was restless. His black hooded robes swirled around him as he paced in graceful motion.

When the door to his room opened, without the benefit of an announcement, he knew it could only be one person. Immediately he was on his knees, paying obeisance to his Master.

“Arise, Prisoner. I have particularly good news for you; and a favor to ask.”

Prisoner’s eyes went wide. “Ask anything of me, Master, and it is yours.”

“Would you die for me, Prisoner?”

Prisoner’s voice was strong and steady. “Of course, Master, if my death will serve you, I would consider it a great honor.” Prisoner pulled a dagger out of his boot. “Shall it be by my own hand, or by another’s?”

Lucius smiled and laid a hand on Prisoner’s arm. “Put your dagger away. That is not necessary, my friend.”

Prisoner looked up adoringly into the eyes of his master. “Master, you called me your ‘friend’.” There were tears in his eyes at the honor of it.

“Yes, I did, and from now on, that will be your name. “Friend.”

“Friend” he repeated, trying out his new name. “I am overwhelmed, my Master. Thank you.”

“Now then, Friend, my son, Draco, is missing, and I have decided to let you find him and bring him back to me. But you must be careful. Do you remember those photographs that I showed you?”

Friend’s eyes narrowed and his voice took on a feral tone. “Yes, Master.”

“He is with those people. Do what ever you have to, to them, but bring my son back to me alive.”

Friend bowed from the waist. “It is my will and my honor to serve you, Master.” Friend looked at Lucius. “Is your son with them of his own will, or are they holding him there?”

“They are holding him against his will, Friend. Why would you think that he is there by his choice?”

“My deepest apologies, my Master, I meant no insult. There is just...something...in the back of my mind...” Friend shook his head as if to clear it. “I am sorry, my Master. I have misspoken.” Friend looked mortally ashamed and bowed his head before Lucius.

“Can you help him?”

Friend smiled. “It is my honor to serve you, Master.” He stuck his wand in a hidden pocket and began walking toward the door.

“Friend, there is one more thing.”

“Yes, my Master?”

“Remove your robe, please, and come to me.”

Friend did as he was asked. “There is one more gift that I want you to have. This will connect you unerringly to me. Are you willing to receive my mark?”

“Absolutely, Master.”

“Give me your left arm.”

Friend did as he was asked and Lucius touched the tender skin just below the elbow with his wand. The Malfoy family crest was engraved into Friend's skin. He looked in wonder as the black tattoo appeared. As the pain seared its way through his body, Friend merely looked at his arm, welcoming the pain and the singular honor that his Master had asked him to endure it for him.

When Lucius was finished, Friend bowed deeply. "Thank you, my Master. May I ask a question of you?"

"Of course, Friend, what is it?"

"Where might I find these people?"

Lucius smiled. "They are on the Island of Hawaii..."

Chapter 33 – Escape and Dark Marks

Draco paced in the room that had been provided for him in the Manor; one of the rooms that had not yet been remodeled. The windows were barred and the whole room warded.

Ginny, in her 'kindness', had allowed him a pillow and a blanket; and nothing more. He wondered if Moira was still in the castle, and if she would come see him. He wondered if she even wanted to acknowledge him as her husband after everything he had done.

He stood at the barred window and looked out, wondering if and when he would get out of this one. His father would be furious at him, he knew, but he didn't care as long as he got out of there. He knew that it would not be long before the Auror's – no, Special Forces, would be there to collect him.

As he stood, gazing out of the window, he watched a black spot in the sky, and wondered at the size of the bird, to look that large from this distance. But, as it came closer and closer, Draco realized that, this, was no bird; it was a wizard, on a broom.

It was with curiosity that he watched. Then as the figure drew closer, and Draco realized who it was, he almost fainted.

Friend, hovered at the window and motioned him away from it, then proceeded to blow a huge hole in the wall around the window. He didn't have to say a thing to Draco. The captive leapt onto the back of Friend's broom and was gone before anyone could prevent or interfere.

They landed a good distance from the Manor, and Friend turned in a rage on Draco. "How did you allow yourself to be captured? My Master is not happy."

Draco looked at Harry and opened his mouth to speak but nothing came out.

"You are an insult to my Master's name. Were I you, I would not dare to call myself his son."

Draco laughed in disbelief – and sorrow. “They actually did it! I would not have believed it, but they did it.”

“What are you blathering about?”

“Take me home, Prisoner.”

He looked indignant. “My name is, Friend.”

Once again, Draco’s jaw dropped. He shook himself and shut it again. “Then take me home – Friend.”

Friend smirked. He had never met the Master’s errant son, but he felt an immediate animosity toward him. “I would not be so anxious to return if I were you. Your father is angry. I am more his than you are.”

Draco’s brows furrowed. “What are you talking about?”

Friend raised the sleeve of his robe, and showed Draco his mark, shining and oozing a bit, but unmistakably the Malfoy Crest.”

Draco’s eyes widened. “He gave you that?”

Friend seemed to puff out his chest in pride. “Yes, as a symbol of his trust in me.”

Draco studied the man before him and shook his head in sadness. He mumbled something and looked a bit dejected.

Friend smirked. “What was that? I didn’t hear you.”

With a sigh he answered. “Take me home, Friend.”

Friend returned Draco to his father without incident, and watched in jealousy as his Master greeted him with kindness as a loving father to his son.

Lucius walked across the room and clapped Friend on the shoulder. “You did well, Friend. Know that this day you have earned your name.

Friend’s voice was soft with emotion, as he looked at his Master. He bowed. “Thank you, My Master. He dropped to his knees and kissed

the hem of his robe. When he did so, something flashed through his mind. The picture of a boy, naked, dirty and half-starved soiling the garment of his master. Fury welled up in his breast for reasons that he didn't understand. How dare that trash touch his Master? He stood again and looked at the floor.

"Come here, Friend."

Friend followed his Master.

Lucius handed him a jar, and he looked up questioningly.

"Put that on the Mark; it will take the pain away."

"But, Master, I would gladly..."

Lucius held up a hand. "I know you would, Friend. However, I do not wish it."

Friend bowed his head. "Forgive my impertinence, Master. Of course I will use it."

"Good. Now, Draco, have you had the chance to be properly introduced to Friend?"

"Yes, sir." Draco stared at the other man with a mixture of emotions. Secretly, pretending to hate Harry, in front of his father, was going to be a real chore; one that might prove to be detrimental to his own health. If Harry detected any sort of disloyalty directed toward *'His Master'*, Draco knew his life wouldn't be worth a sickle.

Friend returned the gaze; hatred almost oozing from his pores.

"Good. I have an assignment for the two of you."

&

Professor Albus Dumbledore paced the kitchen of the Potter's Manor. The twinkle that was generally so prominent, was noticeably missing. Severus Snape sat at the table with Molly and Arthur Weasley on one side and Ginny on the other. Ron leaned on the counter looking out

the window, deep in thought. Arthur had sent the remaining Weasleys to their various homes, with the exception of George, who was given the task of staying with Mikeal.

Charts, maps and assorted papers lay spread out across the table top, all but forgotten. After hours of research and study, they were still no closer to discovering the whereabouts of Lucius Malfoy and by default, Harry Potter.

The teapot began to whistle and Ginny dragged herself up to make tea for the tired researchers.

Ron broke the silence. "We don't even know if they are still here! Malfoy could have taken him anywhere in the world. I say that we go upstairs and torture the git until we get some satisfactory information from him."

Molly frowned at her son. "RON! We do not torture. Besides, he has been given Veritaserum several times; if he knows where Harry is, it is buried so deeply that we will never get it.

"Maybe so, mum, but it is a whole lot more satisfying to torture him."

Ron stared out the window again and the room went quiet as before. He watched the trees in the distance sway gently in the island breezes, then suddenly all of the birds took flight.

His eyes furrowed as he watched a black object hurtle through the sky. "Merlin, it's him, it's Harry, I know it is! Nobody fly's like that! He tore through the house and into the room he was using and grabbed his broom. Then an explosion rocked the Manor. He could hear everyone downstairs scrambling in his wake but he wouldn't wait for them.

In a moment, he was in the room where they were keeping Draco, and saw them leaving through a huge hole in the wall.

He followed. Everything was confusing. Why would Harry rescue Malfoy? Why would he risk being seen by the Muggles? Maybe he was under the Imperious curse. But no, the Imperious curse had no effect on Harry. But Ginny said that they were torturing him;

information gotten thanks to Mikeal's remarkable gift. Perhaps, he thought, they have finally succeeded in breaking the Great Harry Potter.

As an after thought, and while in mid-flight, Ron decided that putting the Disillusionment Charm on himself and his broom, was the better part of valor.

So it was that when Harry and Malfoy landed, a good distance from the Manor, Ron was able to hover above them unnoticed.

After a few minutes of argument between the two men, and the sickening display of the new mark on Harry's arm, they took off again. Ron followed until he watched Harry begin to descend.

Ron stopped, he knew Lucius Malfoy; and there were, no doubt, wards set up around his complex. Taking note of exactly where he was, he sped back to the Manor to get help.

Ron was greeted with chaos. Once everyone was back in the kitchen, he explained everything he heard between the two, and where the Malfoy's complex was. Then he looked at his little sister and squatted down so as to be at eye level. With tears in her eyes she looked at her brother.

"There's more, Gin. He has a mark, a dark mark, just here..." he point to his own left arm, "I was too far away to see it clearly, but there was no mistaking what it was; and he was proud of it. He positively glowed when he told Malfoy that he belonged more to his Master than Draco did."

Ginny closed her eyes, and tears worked their way from under her eyelids and down her cheeks.

Arthur let out a low whistle and ran his hand through his hair. "That's it then, we've lost him."

Ginny jumped up and looked at her father, in horror. "What are you saying, daddy? We aren't going to just let him have Harry. Have you gone around the bend?"

“Genevra! Do not talk to your father that way.”

She looked at her mother. “Are you telling me, mother, that if the situation were reversed, that you wouldn’t do everything in your power to get daddy back?”

Arthur walked across the room and took his daughter in his arms. “I am sorry, baby, you misunderstand me. I am not at all suggesting that we abandon Harry. It’s just that now we know what we are working with, and what is working against us. If Harry has truly been broken, and brainwashed, then he will fight us tooth and nail. He will not wish to leave the security of the only home he knows now. It is going to make our job more difficult. Not impossible, just difficult. But at least, now, we have a starting point from which to work.”

Dumbledore looked at Ron. “It was only fast thinking on your part, that got us to this point, Mr. Weasley. Very well done!”

Ron blushed as he always did when the Professor praised him. “Thank you, sir. There is something else you should all know. Harry will not answer to that name any longer. When they landed, and started to argue, Malfoy called him, ‘Prisoner.’ Harry got indignant and told him in no uncertain terms that his name was ‘Friend.’

Dumbledore nodded, “That is, indeed, very useful information. All right, our objective is to get Harry away from them. We will need to keep Mr. Weasley’s information in mind. Anything that we can use, to make Harry’s re-capture go as smoothly as possible, is a must. If he prefers to be called ‘Friend’, then that is what we will call him initially.

“Now, if I am not mistaken, I believe that Lucius will use Harry in a preemptive strike against us. A demoralizing tool, of sorts; and we, assembled here, will be the first target.”

Ron looked at him. “How do you know that?” Then he looked at Ginny. “How does he know that?”

“Mr. Weasley, it is the most logical course of action for Lucius to follow. He broke Harry for a reason. It wasn’t just to see if he could. My guess is that he knew that it would devastate the wizarding world if he took the beacon of all that was good and right in this world, and

turned him against his very own..." he sighed, "I don't like to think about it, but were I to be completely honest, were I in Lucius' shoes, it is what I would do.

"The attack will come swift and hard, in an attempt to catch us off guard." He sighed and sat down. "The only thing that I am not certain of is where he will hit us. I suppose he could attack here. Harry and Draco know this Manor well; but were I Lucius, this wouldn't be my first choice."

"Professor," George said, "Since this Manor is our territory, so to speak, wouldn't it be wise to force the attack here by simply staying here until they come?"

"That, Mr. Weasley, is precisely what we will do."

Chapter 34 – There is no Before

“Why are you putting him in charge of this mission? Do you really trust him that much, father?”

“I trust Friend, more than I trust you, Draco. Friend simply does what I ask him to. He never questions, he never complains and he would never disappoint me.”

Draco looked disgusted. “Yes, that is quite the little automaton you have there. I’ll admit, father, that blind obedience has its uses, but in a battle situation, you are going to need someone who can think for himself, not react to how he has been programmed to think. Each day his simpering gets more and more unbearable. How can you stand it?”

“I stand it, because it is Harry Potter. I have broken him; he is mine; and if I can do that to him, I can do that to anyone. Maybe even...Albus Dumbledore.”

Draco’s eyes got wide. “That is a laudable goal, father. However, even Voldemort was afraid of him; and though we don’t know the reasoning behind that, I believe it is one to take note of.”

“Voldemort,” Lucius spat, “was a fool, who underestimated his enemies. I, will not make that same mistake...” He looked pointedly at Draco. “...about anyone. Do you understand me, Draco?”

Draco lowered his eyes, in supposed shame, at the thinly veiled threat. In reality, it was to hide the hate he was feeling. “Yes, father. I understand perfectly.”

Friend stood in the corner of the room, partially hidden in the shadows, listening to his blond rival. He very quickly made a decision. Draco Malfoy would die; soon; and at his hand. To speak to his master with such disrespect was, unforgivable.”

Lucius held a hand out toward the corner of the room. “Friend, please join us now. I would like to plan an attack against the Manor.

Friend quickly obeyed; he knelt, took Lucius' outstretched hand and kissed the signet ring, then he moved his right hand to his heart then to the ring, and then touched the ring to his forehead in a show of the deepest respect. "My mouth, my heart and my mind are yours," he intoned.

Lucius' eyebrows rose a bit, in surprise, at Friend's actions, and then smiled. "Very nicely put, Friend. Very nicely put. You may rise."

As he did so, Friend looked at Draco with a smirk, as if he were looking at someone who was less than the dirt on Lucius' shoes."

Lucius signaled the two to sit, and then paced in front of them, for a moment, in silence, as he thought. He turned to the two young men sitting at the table. "The plan is very simple, really. I want you to take a group of my best Death Eaters, 20 of them should be enough, and attack the Manor. Bring back all that are there. Do not allow any of them to escape; do not kill any of them. Dead hostages are useless to me."

"Friend, do you remember anything of the lay of the Manor?"

Friend sat in deep thought for a while. "I am deeply sorry, my Master. I do not remember ever being there. I am certain that if you say that I have been, that I will remember it when I get there."

Draco was resting his lip on his knuckles, listening to the conversation between his father and Friend, and not believing that his father was actually doing this. When his rival admitted to not remembering, he got up and grabbed onto the arms of Friend's chair. "If you can't remember ever being there, you are useless!"

Friend shot up out of the chair, pushing Draco out of the way as he did so, then glared at the blond. "The only thing useless around here, is a whiny little, Death Eater wanna-be, who doesn't have the brains to figure out what side he is really on! Either you are a Death Eater, Draco, and you honor *your* Master by taking his mark, or you are with that simpering, witless, headmaster; but you need to make a decision soon.

Friend gave Draco one last glare, and sat back down. Almost immediately, he realized what he had done and was appalled. "My apologies, my master, for my out-burst in your presence. I forgot myself."

"Friend, you are indeed a loyal follower; but you did forget yourself." Lucius pointed to Draco. "This is my son; and my reasons for not insisting that he take my mark are between him and me, it is not your place to correct him."

Friend dropped to his knees. "Punish me as you will, my master."

Draco rolled his eyes with disgust, and wanted to yell at him, "You are nothing but a lap dog. For Merlin's sake, Harry, have some dignity." He missed Potter. There was none of the fire, none of the stubbornness, there was no joy or sorrow, there was no life; just robotic platitudes of undying devotion, to a man that hated him, and would do anything to debase The-Boy-Who-Lived.

He knew his father all too well. Unless Potter gave him something of a fight; the tiniest bit of rebellion, Lucius would tire of the constant devotion; and it would not go well for his most devoted servant.

Draco shook his head. He couldn't believe what he was planning. Planning? Yes, it was definitely the beginnings of a plan. He had to get Potter out of here. He had spent years with him. He knew how he thought, he knew how he reacted in battle, he knew how he loved his family; and to think of what his father had made of him, it was – was – well, unthinkable.

True, when he and his father instigated this plan, he had hated Harry Potter. After all, Potter was instrumental in putting Lucius in Azkaban back in fifth year. That, is what spawned all of this. Now, years later, when all the planning had culminated, he regretted his involvement. He had spent too much time in the company of one, Harry Potter. What was even worse, he realized that he could not identify the exact moment that his hatred for The-Boy-Who-Lived, had morphed from hatred into respect, and then into genuine like.

Suddenly, it was like a knife wielded through the heart. The realization almost killed him. He did not hate Harry Potter at all.

He shook his head at these thoughts, trying to dispel them. He looked again at the man, paying obeisance to Lucius and determined, at that moment, that if he had anything to say about it, he would get him out of here, and it had to be soon.

“Crucio.”

The word brought him out of his thoughts, as he watched Harry writhe on the floor at Lucius’ feet. There was no screaming, Draco noted. To Harry, no, to Friend, that would have been the ultimate insult to Lucius; to give in to the lowest form of expression while receiving punishment, for a perceived wrong. No, he knew that Friend would not scream. However, the effects on his body could not be missed. When Lucius lifted his wand, Friend’s muscles spasmed; a remnant of time spent in psychological and physical torture. His body was only just healing itself from that ordeal. Draco doubted that his mind would ever heal.

He watched, Harry, with interest. Yes, it was Harry he watched now, he determined; not Friend. The strength that it took to withstand the Cruciatus Curse took a cache of will that Lucius had not tortured out of him. It may be warped, it may be bent, but it was not gone.

Of necessity, Draco stood and watched in silence, as Friend staggered to his feet, and stood with his head bowed, in respect to Lucius. “Thank you, my Master.”

Lucius reached out and wiped a spot of blood from Friend’s mouth. “Well done, Friend. Today, you will receive a new name.”

Friend’s head shot up. “Master?”

“From today on, you will be known as, Harry. Draco, take Harry and build your team and meet me here in one hour.”

Draco nodded, not trusting himself to speak. He followed Harry out of the room and Draco stopped him with a hand on his arm. “Harry, congratulations. This is a great day for you.”

Harry looked at Draco’s hand on his arm, then slowly moved his sight to Draco in unspoken demand. As if he had been burned, Draco

jerked his hand away. "Sorry. Anyway, this is a great day because, you are again a person. Not like before. My father has honored you above all." He looked at Harry, hoping to innocently get some thinking going without raising suspicion. "Do you remember how you were before, Harry?"

Harry narrowed his eyes and studied Draco in confusion, then slowly answered. "There is no before, Draco. There is only, now."

Draco shook his head. "Now there, you are wrong, Harry. There is always, before."

Draco stared at Harry, hoping to be able to plant the seeds of doubt. A co-operative Harry would be so much easier to deal with.

"Perhaps we should go build our strike team, Harry." Draco swept a hand before him. "After you."

Harry furrowed his brow and gave Draco a single nod.

Chapter 35 – Helping Harry

Ron stood in the kitchen with a parchment in his hand. In silence he read:

Weasley,

I know you have no reason to believe what I am about to tell you, but for Harry's sake, I hope you choose to at least give me an opportunity to lead you to him.

You wouldn't know him. He has been completely broken. He remembers nothing of his former life. He has blocked everything. I have begun trying to get him to remember, but I don't have much time. In fact, I have no time at all.

I have no reason to believe that I will survive this. I know that you want to kill me; and frankly you have good reason. Harry wants to kill me as well, but not for turning him over to my father. He doesn't remember that. No, Harry wants to kill me as a rival for my father's affection, if you can believe it, and if my father gets word of my actions, I won't live out the day. Don't get me wrong, I don't want to die, but my desire for self-preservation has been over-ridden by seeing what Harry has become.

I am not going to try to explain it. Words fail. Suffice it to say that when he is returned to you, you will probably have to keep him prisoner, to prevent him from returning to my father.

As a show of good faith, I will tell you of a strike by the Death Eaters that Lucius has put Harry in charge of. Tomorrow morning, there will be an attack on the Manor. We are instructed to do anything, in our considerable power, to bring back everyone that is there. Get Miki out. Send him to the home or back to the Burrow, anywhere away from the Manor. I would appreciate it if you would get Moira out as well. You should know by now, that she had nothing to do with any of this and is probably heart-broken.

I have been attempting to get into Harry's sphere of influence. It isn't easy. Let me tell you a little of what you will be facing concerning Harry. First, he was psychologically and physically tortured, to the

point that any normal human being would have broken. But, we are talking about Harry here. He would not give up that sense of self that is so important. He had a reason to fight. He was fighting for his family. This went on for weeks and still he wouldn't budge.

The thing that finally broke him was Lucius having one of the Death Eaters impersonate Ginny by using Polyjuice Potion. 'Ginny' then proceeded to place him under the Cruciatus Curse for killing Miki. His mind couldn't take another thing.

As soon as he broke, Lucius began to treat him kindly. He clothed him, fed him, and gave him all that he had been lacking in the previous weeks during the torture sessions. Harry rarely if ever saw him during those weeks, and when he finally cracked, Lucius was there with comfort. He looks at my father as his rescuer. Harry Potter worships Lucius Malfoy. But it even goes beyond that. Every day that passes, Harry goes deeper into his own world where Lucius is his god. To give you an example Weasley, I saw him endure the Cruciatus Curse with barely a whimper because he thought it would be disrespectful to my father to give in to screams when he deserved the punishment; which he didn't.

Some of these things that I am telling you are second hand information as I was not there, others I witnessed first hand.

To show you that I am serious about getting Harry out, during the attack tomorrow morning, I will have Harry on the ridge about ½ mile south of the Manor. The two of us will be alone. You can wear his invisibility cloak, or cast a disillusionment charm or any of a number of things that will make you more comfortable with the situation. I suggest that you bring Aurors in, because it will take that to capture and keep Harry safe. One more thing, if I were you, I wouldn't have Ginny there. It will definitely set him off. Having Harry back is going to be as difficult on her as not having him back. In fact my suggestion is that you not even show her this letter. But it is your choice, of course.

Now, I know that no manner of communication will convince you that I am doing this for Harry's good. You'll just have to trust me. But for the love of Merlin, Weasley, get him out!

DM

Ron re-read the letter 3 more times before he moved out of the kitchen. He went to the room where Dumbledore was staying and knocked on the closed door.

"Come in, Mr. Weasley. I've been expecting you."

Ron didn't even take the time to wonder why the Professor knew that he was coming to talk to him. "Professor, I got a letter."

"Yes, Mr. Weasley; I got one too."

"Then what do you make of it?"

"I believe, Mr. Weasley, that Harry is going to be returned to us."

"How can we trust Malfoy, Professor?"

"The real question is how can we not?"

"Then we are going to proceed as if this is true?"

"We will, of course, take precautions."

Ron only nodded, having learned years earlier that heeding Professor Albus Dumbledore was always a good idea.

Ron convinced Ginny to get Moira out of the house for an excursion. "Both of you need a break Gin. Go stay at a hotel, sit in the Jacuzzi, take Moira with you. I know that you are strong Sis, but Moira is a basket case. She thinks that we all blame her. She hasn't eaten or slept since this started. That's not good for the baby. Get some potions for her so that she can rest. Dreamless Sleep comes to mind. You are her only real friend, you know. She misses Malfoy as much as you miss Harry, Merlin knows why, but there you are. Will you do it? Can you put aside your worry for Harry for a while and help a friend in need? You know that we will be here in case anything happens."

"But..."

"Please, Gin, I'm worried about both of you."

She sighed deeply. She studied the pleading look on Ron's face and sighed again. "All right, but if anything happens..."

"We will all be here."

She nodded. "Maybe, I'll take Miki with me. He could use a break too. He is so worried about his daddy."

He opened up his arms and she walked into them. "That's a good idea, baby sis."

After Ginny, Moira and Miki left, Ron found Dumbledore in the library having a long discussion with Tavish.

Ron bowed respectfully to the ghost. "Milord.' Then turned to the Professor. "Sir, the girls and Miki are gone."

"Well done, Mr. Weasley. You are probably the only one who could have managed it. The Aurors should start arriving soon. We are taking Mr. Malfoy at his word and having as many people there as we can manage."

"It might frighten Harry, sir. Do you think we should?"

"Mr. Weasley, in the beginning, everything is going to frighten Harry. I'm afraid it can not be avoided. There will also be several Medi-Wizards there to help. I believe, our Mr. Potter, will be in good hands. I have informed the remaining residents of the house of the situation and asked them to return to their homes, to be recalled when we have Harry secure. Should there be a break through in our forces, and Death Eaters get into the Manor, there will be nobody here to attack; except for trained Auror's that is. I think that there will be some US Special Forces here as well."

"You've thought of everything sir."

Dumbledore placed a hand in the pocket of his robes and pulled out a tin. "Lemon drop, Mr. Weasley?"

Ron smiled. "I believe I will, Professor."

&

The attack came at six a.m. but the attacking Death Eaters found the wards around the Manor had been strengthened. Spell after spell hit the protective shield, but ricocheted harmlessly off.

Just before the strike, Draco had lured Harry to the ridge, with the story that they should block all possible escape routes. "It would be just like those sniveling wretches to try to run away, rather than stay and fight.

Harry hadn't said anything as they walked toward the ridge, away from the fighting. As he walked, he studied Draco.

After a while, Draco chuckled a bit. "What is it, Harry?" He didn't look at him, afraid that somehow his plan would show on his face.

"You are different, somehow. What has changed?"

Draco walked in silence for about a minute, then shrugged. "Would you believe me if I told you that I am jealous of you?"

Harry stopped and looked at him, but all he saw was Draco's retreating back. "No, I wouldn't."

Draco shrugged again. "Your choice, of course; but I am. I'm jealous of your relationship with my father, first and foremost. I have been trying to get him to treat me like he treats you since I was a child. He loves you, you know, Harry, in his way, I suppose."

Once again Harry stopped and stared, then ran to catch up. "Do you really think so?"

"Of course. I wouldn't say it if it wasn't true."

Harry was quiet for a while, then spoke with a bit of irony in his voice. "Then you are luring me up here to kill me." It was a statement of fact not a question. "You will not win, Draco."

Draco chuckled. "No Harry, I don't want you dead."

Harry narrowed his eyes. "Then what is it?"

They had reached the point that Draco had appointed, then turned to Harry. "I want you safe. You don't realize it, but my father is a maniac, Harry, and you are so wrapped up in hero worship that you can't see it. You are just too...good, for the likes of him."

Harry drew his wand and pointed it at his rival. "You would dare speak of my Master, like that, to me? Do you have a death wish, Draco? I can't believe that you would..."

But Draco interrupted him by a wave of his hand. "I know that you don't remember it, Harry, but we were once friends. But I did something unforgivable to you and that ended. Do I regret it? Yes, I do. Can I do anything about it? There again I would have to answer, yes."

Draco turned his back on Harry and walked a few steps away. Harry, you can't continue like this. Lucius will destroy you. He is already half-way there. You have a family that loves you, and a life that is the envy of every wizard in the world. Go back to it. Relearn it if you have too, but do it."

Harry felt the anti-Apparating spell hit him at the same time as six Aurors surrounded him. He screamed at Draco. "You are a traitor!"

Harry struggled to get away from the six men surrounding him.

Draco smiled sadly. "Yes, I am. To everybody. Harry, stop struggling and go with them, they won't hurt you. They are only here to help.

Harry started struggling mindlessly as the entire group disappeared. The last thing that Draco heard was a strangled scream of frustration.

Draco walked over and sat down on the edge of the ridge absently throwing small rocks down the steep slopes.

Ron walked over and sat next to him. "That was a good thing you did, you know."

"Is everyone safe?"

“Yes.”

“And Harry. Is he...”

“They are taking him to a hospital in California. There is a Healer there that can help him.”

“And Moira, is she...all right?”

“She misses you, but she will be fine. Ginny took her and Miki out of the Manor last night.”

He stood up and brushed his robes off. “Well, I suppose...”

Ron didn’t look up at Malfoy when he stood up. “Come back with us.”

“What? Have you gone around the bend?” He chuckled humorlessly. “I like my skin right where it is, thank you very much. Ginny would skin me alive.”

Now Ron stood and looked directly at Malfoy. “You’re right, she would. At least for now. She is going to have a difficult time of it for a long while. No, what I meant was, that Dumbledore has a place for you, at Hogwarts. It is well hidden, and the last place in the world that anyone, including Lucius, would look for you.”

He snorted. “What am I, the local charity case?”

“Get over yourself Malfoy. You did a good thing. Dumbledore wants to give you a chance at something different. Take it or leave it, but I would consider the alternatives. You asked me to trust you in that letter you sent. Now, I am asking you the same thing.”

Draco seemed to consider Ron’s proposition. “A hidden place at Hogwarts?”

Ron laughed. “With all the potion making you could want.”

Draco made a face. “Hate potion making.”

Ron’s look was incredulous. “Wait a minute, What? You hate potions?”

Draco chuckled again, but this time with genuine humor. "Can't stand it."

"But your grades..."

"Barely passable."

"You're having me on."

"Longbottom was better than I was."

"All right, now I know you're having me on."

"Nope."

"Huh, live and learn."

Draco laughed. "Except potions."

Ron chuckled. "Yeah, except potions. So, what's it to be Malfoy?"

"It would be like voluntarily, walking into a prison cell."

"I can't deny that, up to a point."

"What do you mean, up to a point?"

"Well, you know Dumbledore, He always has a few tricks up his sleeve. I wouldn't put it past him to hide you right under the very noses of the Wizengamot."

Malfoy looked at him slyly. "You know I could call the Death Eaters here right now, and they would take you to my father."

Ron laughed. "Then we'd have to go through this whole thing again when you return me to my home."

Draco graced Ron with that familiar Malfoy smirk. "I don't know about that, Weasley. I wouldn't feel the same compulsion to get you out."

"You aren't going to do that."

“What makes you so sure, Weasley?”

“One, if you were going to, you would have done it already; and two, the Death Eaters are probably all rounded up by now.”

“I figured as much.” Draco shook his head in disbelief. “These are the best that my father had and they would have a hard time finding their noses to pick.” He sighed, “So Weasley, who ever thought that you and I would have so much in common. We both hurt him; and we are both scrambling to make it up to him.”

Ron looked out over the cliff and admired the greenery for a while. “Yeah.”

They were quiet for a while, as they took in the peaceful scenery. Then Ron turned back to Malfoy. “Oh, did I mention that Dumbledore said, that if Moira wanted to come with you, that...”

“Let’s go.”

Chapter 36 – The Hospital

Harry paced back and forth in the hospital room. Anger was evident on his face, as a man who was evidently a healer, walked into the room and looked at his patient. “Hello, Harry, I’m Morty.”

Harry snorted in derision. “How wonderful for you. Let me go.”

The man nodded. “Eventually, but we have some things that we need to discuss first; and until we do, I’m afraid that you’ll have to stay here.”

Harry’s smile was cruel and mocking. “And I’m afraid, Morty, that I am going to have to curse you into next year.”

The man laughed and shook his head, “You might as well know, Harry, that there are wards in place around this room that dampen your magical ability. You can’t curse me.”

Harry turned and looked at the window, as if to study the merits of breaking it and jumping to the ground.”

Morty followed his gaze and added, “Unbreakable charm, placed on the outside. Bars make people feel, caged, so we came up with this little idea. Pretty ingenious, don’t you think?”

Harry turned and sneered at the irritating man. “Delightful. When I return to my Master, you will be the first to die a slow painful death...” then he added as an afterthought, “...Morty!”

“Who is your Master, Harry?”

“I wouldn’t soil his name by speaking it in your presence. He is my Master. That is all you need know.”

“All right, as you wish, Harry; but this is one of the subjects that we will need to discuss before I release you to your wife.”

“My wife!” He spat out. “I have no wife. I have only my Master.”

The man looked surprised. "Oh? Really? Hum, well there is a young lady and a small boy waiting, not very patiently, to see you. She says she is your wife. Do you remember her, Harry?"

Harry stopped, and remembered something that Draco had said, just before he was taken by these...these...squibs. He had said, "*You have a family that loves you, go back to them.*" Then he waved a hand in front of his face to dispel the thoughts. "Why would I listen to anything that a traitor says?"

He didn't realize that he had said that out loud, but he must have, because Morty asked, "And who is a traitor, Harry."

Harry growled and threw himself into a chair. "That is none of your concern. I will deal with him when I get out of here; and mark my words, I will get out of here. My Master will come for me."

"Perhaps. Perhaps he will punish you for being captured."

"It is no more than I deserve. To allow that ungrateful bas..."

But Morty held up a hand, "We need to establish some ground rules before we go any farther, Harry. There will be no foul language in our discussions. A spell has been placed upon you that should your language deteriorate into vulgarity, you will receive a shock. Now, as you were saying."

Harry's voice literally dripped with sarcasm. "Oh, and do the good guys really torture?"

Morty chuckled. "I suppose you could look at it that way, but it's not torture if it is self-inflicted."

"You're a real bastard aren't you?" A jolt went through him that traveled from the top of his head to the bottom of his feet, but he smirked.

Morty was writing something on the clipboard, when Harry stood, grabbed the arms of the healers' chair, leaned in close and let loose a string of obscenities that turned the air blue. He then smirked at the Healer, stood up and sneered, "I've endured worse on a walk through

the woods, you fool. Do you know what the Cruciatus Curse does to you? Once you've experienced that, nothing else compares.' Harry sat down and laughed at the genuine look of surprise on Morty's face.

He looked at Harry without comment for a moment. "Some other form of punishment then is in order, Mr. Potter."

"And who, may I ask, is Mr. Potter? Surely you aren't speaking of me!"

"That is your name, Harry Potter."

"My name is Harry, just Harry."

Suddenly, there was a tremendous amount of commotion, coming from outside Harry's door. Morty threw a disgusted glance over his shoulder as if it were the door itself that was guilty of the noise.

"I WILL SEE HARRY, NOW! So, if you don't want to be blasted into oblivion, I suggest that you move out of my way!"

Harry stood, looked at the Healer, and raised an eyebrow. "A little performance for my benefit, Morty?"

"Not one of my doing, I assure you."

Just then the door swung and Ginny Potter ran into the room. She ran across the room, threw herself into Harry's arms and started covering his face with kisses.

Harry pushed her away and wiped his lips pointedly. He looked at the healer with an unspoken question.

"Your wife, Ginny."

For the first time, Harry looked at Ginny. Flashes played through his mind as he looked at this woman, and a hatred so pure assaulted his senses. He grabbed onto the foot of the bed to keep himself upright,

Immediately, Morty grabbed him to keep him from falling. "Mrs. Potter, leave!"

Harry's breath was coming in quick gasps and a fine sheen of sweat appeared on his forehead.

"No, he is my husband, I will stay."

Harry reached out his hands, and before Morty could stop him, had them around her throat and was squeezing."

Ginny tried desperately to loosen his grip, but it was trying to bend steel with her bare hands.

Harry growled into her face. "I killed you once, bitch. You should have stayed dead!"

"Harry, release her or I will have to stun you and put you in restraints."

His grip only tightened.

By this time, Ginny had quit struggling and she was allowing the darkness to overtake her. She fell to her knees in front of him and she looked up into the eyes of hatred.

The next moment, Harry was lying on the floor due to a well placed stunning curse.

"Mrs. Potter, are you all right?"

Ginny was on her hands and knees gasping for breath, struggling to understand, and fighting to stay conscious. She looked at the Healer and said only, "Why?"

"I tried to tell you earlier, Mrs. Potter. This is not your Harry. It will be a long while before he is cured, if he ever is."

He helped her get to her feet. She looked sadly at the figure sprawled on the floor. "I will have him back, Healer. Do you hear me, I will."

"From your mouth, to God's ears, Mrs. Potter; are you able to walk now?"

She nodded her head and he led her to the door. She looked back one last time at Harry and tears threatened to fall. She shook her head to dispel any thoughts of defeat, straightened her shoulders and looked at the Healer. "You will tell me how I can help."

"The *best* way you can help, is not to come around for a while. I am sorry to be so blunt, but his mind is in a very fragile state right now. Another incident like this one might well push him over the edge."

"Healer, Harry Potter is my husband. He is going to have to get used to having me around for a good long time. I suggest that you start working with that point, because I am not going anywhere! Do I make myself clear?"

"If that is the case, Mrs. Potter, then you just might loose him for good!"

She looked past the Healer, to Harry. "You are wrong. Good day to you Healer. I will be back." Ginny turned and left with a new determination coursing through her veins.

Chapter 37 - Homecoming

"Mrs. Potter, you can't be serious!"

"I have never been more serious in my life, Healer! I will be staying in the room with Harry. Any questions?"

"Yes, where do you want your remaining body parts sent?"

"Very clever, Healer Ozbourne, but none too effective. You see, I am not at all a weak witch. Combine that with the fact that I love that man with all that is in me, the simple truth is, that the only way he will defeat this, is if I am with him. That's the way it will be. If you can't work with that, I know a good number of medi-wizards at St. Mungo's that will be more than happy to aid me. Harry Potter is quite loved."

The healer tried one more time. "Please, Mrs. Potter, reconsider this foolhardy quest."

Ginny looked at the man in front of her. "Mr. Ozbourne, if we go in that room with the slightest aura of disunity, then indeed, all will be lost. If you don't think that you can do that, I will ask to have my husband reassigned to someone else. It is up to you of course, Healer." She looked at him askance.

He sighed. "Very well, Mrs. Potter, very well. I pray that you know what you are doing." He put a hand on the door handle. "Are you ready?"

She nodded and he pushed the door open. "Good morning, Harry. I have a nice surprise for you today. You have a new roommate."

Harry looked at Ginny and sneered then looked at the Healer. "You have got to be kidding me, right?"

"Not at all, Harry. Ginny will be staying here with you, for as long as you are here."

Harry growled at the woman in his room. "Do you have a death wish? Was my first attempt on your life not warning enough for you? Let me

make myself perfectly clear, and I will use small words so that you will understand; I don't want you here. You sicken me."

"Are you quite finished, Harry? Because now it is my turn." She walked up to him and slapped his face. "I am your wife. I promised to love you, and honor you through good times and bad times; and these times are about as bad as they get. But I want you to consider something, if these times are as bad as they get, and we are both still alive and kicking, then we know we can defeat anything else that comes down the road.

"I could kill you in your sleep."

"You could, but you won't."

Harry smirked. "And what makes you so sure?"

She poked a finger continuously into his chest. "Because I know you, Harry Potter. And as confused as you are right now, somewhere, deep inside, are all the memories that we have together. One of these days, you will access them and begin to heal. I will be here to make sure that you do."

He furrowed his brow then with a mocking bow, said, "Welcome, wife. Make your self at home."

By two weeks later, Harry had built up a tolerance for Ginny's presence in his room. That is to say, that he completely ignored her. When she spoke, he didn't answer, and when she was near him, he looked through her.

It was trying. She had gone into this with all hopes that the constant stimulation would spark the memories. She had been wrong. He seemed to be retreating back into himself. He was making strides, all of them backwards, but still she kept on, knowing that things always got worse before they got better.

She saw Miki only rarely, because George had taken him home to the Burrow to stay with the family there. She missed him terribly, almost as much as she missed Harry. But she kept up a brave front, for Harry's sake.

When Christmas time came around, Ginny brought decorations to brighten up the room. She was up on a chair hanging garland when the chair began to wobble. The next thing she knew she was falling, and a moment after that, she was in Harry's arms.

She looked into confused emerald eyes and whispered, "Thank you, Harry."

There was a spark of something for a moment. It was gone quickly and replaced by betrayal and hurt, but she knew that she had seen it.

In confusion and anger, Harry pushed her away. "Leave, I don't want you here. Do you hear me? I don't want you here." He yelled and pushed her again.

"I told you before Harry, I'm not leaving." Ginny's voice was quiet as she looked at him.

He put his hands around her throat and began to squeeze. "Fine, then you will die. I will not tolerate you any longer."

She only looked into his eyes without fear. After another moment he pushed her away. Then he did something he had never done before, he sat in the corner on the floor with his knees pulled up to his chest and began shaking and rocking.

Ginny called the medi-wizard's desk and asked for the Healer, then sat on the floor in front of Harry, not touching him but trying to be a comforting presence anyway. He stared past everything in the room to a scene in his mind.

Ginny's voice was soft and soothing. "Harry, where are you now?"

"A room, made of rock. So c-cold."

"What do you see, Harry?"

"You, killing me."

"That was a lie, Harry. Do you understand me? It was a lie."

He shook his head and looked at her. "It hurt so bad. You did it." Then he was up and trying to strangle her again. "You promised, and you killed me."

"Ha...Ha...ry!" She tried to loosen his hands but he was stronger. She passed out just as the Healer came in and stunned him.

Ginny woke in her bed at home; Miki was sleeping next to her. She was surprised, it had been a long time since she had been in her own bed and struggled to remember what had happened. Then it came back to her. The fall. Harry catching her. The spark she saw in his eyes. Harry rocking back and forth on the floor and finally Harry trying to strangle her.

Despite that part of it, she was intensely happy. And on top of that, Miki was next to her and she reached out and smoothed his tousled hair lovingly. She stretched and yawned and got out of bed. Yesterday had been a difficult day for both her and Harry, and she had the bruises to prove it.

Then she remembered something else, it was Christmas Day. She went downstairs to find a huge tree, fully decorated with gifts stacked high. She went into the kitchen to find her mother puttering around, making her traditional Christmas Breakfast of sweet rolls and pots of hot coffee.

"Mum?" She ran over and gave her mother a huge hug. "Oh mum, it is so wonderful to see you. And Miki's here too. I've missed him so much."

Your father and brothers are here as well. We just decided that you needed us here today of all days."

"Yes, I love Christmas. Harry had some progress yesterday, mum."

Molly frowned. "So we've heard, baby."

Ginny touched her shoulder. "Mum, it was a good thing."

"No, baby, it wasn't. Harry got so bad after the Healer got you out of there that he had to be sedated. They are going to Oblivate him this morning."

Ginny's eyes narrowed. "Oh, no they won't. Not as long as I am alive to prevent it." She immediately Apparated to the hospital and crept into Harry's room. She was happy to see Professor Dumbledore there, watching over him.

"How is he this morning, Professor?"

"Not very good child. I assume you have been told that he is going to be Oblivated this morning. He just can't handle it all." The professor looked sad.

Ginny's voice was quiet so as not to wake Harry, but it was also full of steel. "No Professor, he won't. I will **not** allow it."

"I realize, Ginny, that you are distraught, but this is the best thing for him now."

Ginny stood her ground. "I forbid it!"

At that moment the Healers came in to perform the Oblivate spell and Ginny pulled her wand out and threatened them with it. "You will not touch him. Do you understand? I do not consent to this. He is finally making progress and you will not hinder that because you are tired of working with him. Healer Ozbourn, if you lay so much as a finger on him, I will have so many charges brought against you that you will never practice medicine again."

"Mrs. Potter, be reasonable."

"Reasonable? You people want to take away every thing he has fought for; and when he has finally, *finally* shown the first spark of recovery, you want to take it away from him."

Professor Dumbledore looked at her sympathetically. "Mrs. Potter, Ginny, I understand your reluctance to have this done, I really do, but I feel that it is the best thing for him right now."

She glared at him. "And you are the worst of them. You used him to kill that fool of a Dark Lord, but the first time he needs your help, you turn your back on him and are ready to throw him out with yesterday's garbage. You sicken me! Get out! All of you just get out of here before I hex you all into next week. I am taking him out of this joke house. I am taking him home. He got in this condition because he was fighting for his family. He will continue to fight for his family.

Everyone in the room hurried out, leaving Ginny alone, with Harry. She was panting from her tirade and sat on the floor right where she was and cried.

After a moment she felt a hand on her shoulder and she jerked around to see Harry stooped down behind her. He looked into her eyes for a long moment, confusion clearly visible in those emerald depths. "I don't understand why you just did that."

"I know you don't Harry, but you will understand, I believe that with all my heart."

He stood up and the potions made his head swim so that he had to hold onto the side of the bed.

"Do you feel that you can Apparate?"

He shook his head. "I don't think I can walk right now."

"Port Key, then." She grabbed a water pitcher from the bedside table, dumped it out where it stood and tapped it with her wand and performed the series of movements and spells that would take them home.

After she finished, she wrapped a steadying arm around his waist and they both grabbed the pitcher and were gone.

She brought them directly to their room in the Manor; then turned to him. "Welcome home, Harry." Then caught him as he stumbled. She led him over to the bed and pulled the sheet down. "Harry, you lie down and sleep off those damned potions."

He shook his head. "Why are you doing this? I don't understand."

"Because, I love you." She sat down on the edge of the bed. "Harry, I don't have the ability to take away all of the pain you went through. I can't make it go away; only you can do that. But I am here to help you get through this. I will do everything in my power. I won't let anything happen to you if I can help it." She brushed his hair out of his eyes. "You are safe here. No one here will hurt you. Get some sleep, Harry."

He looked at her with questioning eyes. "When I was with my Master, he told me that I was safe; now, you tell me that I am safe. Both can't be right."

He looked at her with such pain in his eyes, that it was all she could do not to cry. "We'll talk about it when you aren't under the influence of all the sedating potions, Harry. For now, rest." She kissed his forehead and left the room quietly closing the door behind her.

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Ginny leaned against the bedroom door and sobbed. Her heart was breaking for Harry; but also for herself and Miki. She knew when she married Harry that it was not necessarily an easy life that she had chosen, but nothing had prepared her for this. She had underestimated the venom that some in the wizarding world had toward him. She had thought that with Voldemort dead, that Harry's life would settle down a bit. She did not regret for one minute that she had married him; she just wished that everyone would leave him – leave them alone.

Ron came up the corridor and saw her sitting on the floor outside the bedroom door. He sat down next to her. The concern was heavy in his voice when he spoke. "Gin, I thought you went to be with Harry in the hospital. Didn't you make it in time?"

She grabbed his hand and put her head on his shoulder. "Yes, I made it in time and prevented them from doing that awful thing to him."

"Then, why the long face?"

“I just wish – Ron, have you ever just wanted the whole world to go away?”

Ron chuckled lightly. “Only about once a day or so.”

“I brought him home, Ron.”

Ron pulled back and looked at her in shock. “I beg your pardon?”

“I brought him home. He’s in there sleeping off the potions.”

“Harry is here?”

Ginny only nodded her head.

“Merlin, Ginny, what were you thinking? I’m not certain that that was a good decision on your part. He may try to strangle you again.”

“I know, Ron. I know all of that. I just couldn’t leave him there. To them he was just another wizard; a wizard with a serious problem that they didn’t know how to handle. So instead of saying that they didn’t know how to help him, they were going to Oblivate him.

“Who knows? Harry might be happier not remembering any of it, but I just didn’t think that that was fair to him, to me or to Miki. I sincerely don’t think that he would want to be Oblivated.” She sighed heavily. “I love him, and I miss him, so much, Ron. I just want my husband back. I just want my Harry back.”

On the other side of the door, Harry listened to every word she said. With a sigh he returned back to the bed and lay there wide awake, despite the potions working against him. He was so confused. Who did he believe? His Master? His Master would never lie to him, would he? Or did he believe Ginny; Ginny who fought so valiantly for him in the face of opposition? Ginny fought for him in the face of her own life. He quickly tried to remember how many times he himself had threatened her life, just for being in the room with him.

These thoughts tumbled over and over themselves in his mind before the power of the potions finally took their toll, and he fell asleep. That was when the nightmares started.

Chapter 38 – The Christmas Call

He managed to wake himself, without startling the entire house. He really didn't want a room full of people to deal with. He tried to block the visions that he had of himself in a horrible situation. He realized that he was sweating profusely and his breath was just now calming down into a normal rhythm.

As if on cue, there was a tapping on the door, and Ginny pushed it open. When she saw him up, she smiled and went to him. "Are you feeling better, Harry?"

He studied her for a moment before answering. "Much better, thank you."

He immediately began to look around the room, he traced the contours of the four-poster bed, he ran a hand along the dresser top and pulled it away with a thin line of dust. He turned to Ginny, and raised an eyebrow at this, and she laughed. "Well in my defense, I haven't been here in quite a while."

He smiled. "Oh, I see."

He dusted his hand off then continued his explorations; he fingered the vase with long stems and looked at her for explanations again.

She looked at him sadly. "That, Harry, is something between us that you will have to remember for yourself."

"A vase full of stems?" He shook his head and snorted a bit, then began to open all of the drawers and wardrobe doors and study the contents of each carefully. Then he opened the French doors and walked out into the fresh ocean breezes.

Ginny followed him out, and watched him close his eyes and relish the wind as it hit his face; and watched as he breathed deeply and smiled at the smell of the ocean. She stood next to him at the railing. "Does any of this look at all familiar?"

He didn't answer, just stared at the ocean. After a long time he turned to her. "All of this is mine?"

She nodded. "Every stone. The four of us..." she grimaced at the slip.

He raised an eyebrow. "Four?"

She silently cursed herself. "Ah yeah, you and I, Moira and...ah her husband."

He turned back to watch the ocean again. "You are keeping something from me."

She sighed. "Yes, I am; and I am not going to discuss it now. That will come later. Do you trust me Harry?"

He looked at her earnestly. "Honestly? I'd have to say, no. Why would you do this? Why, after I tried to kill you on several occasions, any of which could have been successful; why would you bring me here, with you, with no protection. I don't detect any wards in place, except for maybe wards to protect the house; nothing to protect you, and the members of your family. I could Apparate at any moment and return to my Master. So I ask you, Ginevra Potter, why would you take such a risk?"

She leaned against the balustrade and thought for a long time, while Harry patiently waited for her answer. Finally she turned back to him. "You do know that they were going to Obliviate you this morning, don't you?"

He nodded, but remained silent.

"I had to do something to prevent that. If I had allowed that, there would be nothing left for you to remember. You would never remember the bad times, which I have to admit would probably be a blessing, but more importantly, you would never remember the good times; like the first time we made love, or the day we adopted Miki, or any one of a million different things both large and small.

"True, we could have started from day one and rebuilt our relationship from there, but..."

"It wasn't enough for either of us." Harry put a hand on her cheek and she closed her eyes and a tear slid down her cheek.

With a deep breath she pulled away and leaned against the balustrade again. "I'm not a stupid woman, Harry. I know that this was fool-hearty. You're right, there are no wards in place, there are people here, but truthfully, if you wanted to kill me, there would be nothing to stop you; but Harry, I couldn't let them – I just – couldn't..."

Ginny tears had begun to run down her face in streams now, and she turned away from him.

Harry watched her cry, fighting the urge to take her in his arms and comfort her. After a long time, she quieted but continued to look at the seagulls that floated on the ocean breeze.

When he spoke, it startled her and she turned to him.

"Ginny, I don't remember any of what you have told me. The best I can do is to say that this..." he indicated the Manor, "...seems somehow...comforting. You know that I am a man of my word, don't you?" She nodded and he continued. "I give you my word Ginevra, that until I make up my mind about what you are telling me, I will stay here. When I decide, if the decision I make is to return to my Master, then I will. Do you agree?"

She nodded hesitantly. "You are not a prisoner here, but Harry, how will you determine for yourself whether or not I am telling you the truth?"

He shook his head. "I don't know yet."

Ginny looked at her watch. "Harry, I don't know if you realize it or not, but today is Christmas Day. Would you like to come downstairs and be with the family?"

He shook his head vehemently. "Merlin, no! I'm fine here, thanks."

Ginny laughed. "That's probably a wise decision, Harry. It can get a little...loud when everyone is here. You used to love that though."

He smirked. "I'll take your word on that one."

"I have an idea, how about if I arrange for you, me, and Miki, to have Christmas Dinner up here?"

"Miki?"

"Our son."

Harry snapped. "I know who he is, you've told me enough times. I'm not daft you know."

"Harry, let's not get off on the wrong foot, OK? Miki would like to see you. He misses his daddy."

Harry shook his head. "His daddy," he whispered more to himself than to Ginny. "All right, I'm willing to try this, only because my memories only go back to waking up and being with my master."

"Would you like to see him now, Harry? He is just downstairs."

Harry thought for a minute. "Why not?"

Ginny noticed that he looked troubled, and ran a comforting hand down his arm. "I promise, Harry, we are going to get you through this. It will be OK, eventually. Until then, know that you are loved."

He didn't respond and she patted his arm and left the balcony.

A million things were running through his mind, all of them jumbled one on top of the other. What he told Ginny was true; this place, this Manor, was comforting. He felt that at sometime he had been here before; but then, his Master had told him that; as had Draco.

Draco! He experienced rage, when he thought of him. As far as Harry was concerned, he was not worthy to walk the same ground, or breathe the same air as he did. He was not worthy to be called his Master's son. He was a betrayer, a traitor, a double-crosser. In short, Draco Malfoy, did not deserve to live.

But then, if all that he had been told were true, Draco had rescued him. "Is it rescued or kidnapped?" Harry shook his head in confusion then returned to the darker interior of the bedroom.

As he did so, the door slowly opened, and Harry saw a young boy with dark hair and wide dark eyes peek around the opening. "Daddy?"

When he saw Harry, he ran over and threw his arms around Harry's legs. Harry, bent down and looked at this little stranger but smiled none the less. He realized, right away, that he liked being called 'daddy'.

He watched the tears begin to form in Mikeal's eyes and reached out and pulled him in for a hug. "Shhhh...Miki, it's all right." He picked the boy up, and held him close, while he struggled with his feelings.

Over Mikeal's shoulder, Harry looked at Ginny, and smiled, then took his son and sat in the overstuffed chair. "So, Miki, what have you been doing since I've been gone?"

"I talk a lot to my guide."

Harry's brows knitted together and he looked at Ginny.

She mouthed the word, 'later' and Harry's attention went back to the boy.

"How is school going, Miki? Are you being a good boy?"

"Yeah, teacher says that I'm real smart."

"You bet you are."

Suddenly Mikeal jumped up. "I'll be right back, daddy, I have a Christmas Present for you."

While he was gone, Harry looked at Ginny. "What did he mean that he talks to his guide?"

"After we adopted him, he started spending time sitting by himself, and talking to no one. His teacher sent home a note of concern, so we started paying more attention to what he was doing. At first we thought that it was due to the fact that we took him out of a residence home, with lots of other children around, and brought him here where

there was nothing but adults. You know, an imaginary friend type thing.

After a while, he started talking about wolf. He would tell us what he said, or tell us of instructions that he received from him. We took him to Dumbledore, who talked to him and spent a good deal of time with him.

"Dumbledore? That old fool of a Headmaster?" Disgust was written plainly on his face.

Ginny was taken aback for a minute. "He's not an old fool, Harry."

"Well, that remains to be seen doesn't it?"

Ginny sighed and decided that that argument would have to wait for another day. "Anyway, In the meantime, you and I started delving into Mikeal's family history. What we found was remarkable. Mikeal's family, back probably 400 years ago were prominent in the tribes in the area. They were Shamen."

"Shamen?"

"Yes, and when Mikeal told us that his guide informed him that he was a 'saw man', that was what sparked the whole investigation."

The door burst open, stopping any conversation. Proudly holding a package that he had obviously wrapped all by himself, Mikeal ran and jumped back into his father's lap. "Here daddy, this is for you."

"Thank you, Mikeal, did you do this by yourself?"

"Uh huh. Open it, daddy."

Harry unwrapped a picture, that Mikeal had evidently drawn. It was in a nice frame, but it was the picture that was the most precious. He had drawn a picture of Harry, Ginny and himself. The two adults had him between them and they were swinging him into the air. They were only stick figures, with trees that were purple with orange leaves, and squirrels that were running up the tree trunks that had smiles on their faces; but it brought tears to Harry's eyes.

He hugged the boy close to him and buried his face in his hair. "Thank you, Miki." It was so softly spoken that only Miki heard it and he whispered just as quietly, "I love you, daddy."

He stood up with his son still in his arms and placed the frame in a prominent place on the bedside table. "There. That way, I will be able to look at it every morning, and think of you."

The boy beamed from ear to ear, then turned his head slightly to look at Ginny. "Daddy's home, mum."

She smiled. "Yes he is, baby."

They had Christmas dinner on the balcony. The food was Molly's normal brand of excellence. After they ate, Miki regaled Harry with a blow by blow description of Susie and Robert getting into a fight during paint time at school; and how by the end of it all the two children the teacher and a large area of the class room were covered with purple and green paint.

Harry was relaxed, leaning back, his hands behind his head and eyes closed. Ginny brought him out of his reverie by calling him.

"Oh, Harry."

He opened his eyes and sat up, only to get hit between the eyes with a spoonful of mashed potatoes.

"What the...!"

Both Ginny and Mikeal started laughing. Harry made a great show of slowly grabbing the potatoes off of his face and flicking them onto his plate. He then took up his napkin and wiped his face off.

He looked at Ginny who was laughing and Mikeal who was almost falling out of his chair. "Oh, you think its funny do you; well, let's see what you think of this." He picked up the bowl of potatoes, and looked directly at Ginny, who was turning red she was laughing so hard. He stood up, walked over to Ginny and dumped the entire bowl of mashed potatoes on his own head.

That was it, Ginny lost it right then and there; Mikeal picked up the bowl of salad and dumped it on his own head as well. Harry took the peas and tossed a handful at Mikeal who did the same thing. Soon both Harry and Mikeal were throwing food at each other and laughing wildly.

Harry cocked his head toward Ginny. "I don't know, Mikeal, there is one person sitting at this table that looks entirely too clean. What do you think? They both turned to Ginny, Mikeal was laughing and the glint in Harry's eyes was almost evil.

Ginny stood up and started to back away. "All right, back off, both of you."

Harry's voice was as smooth as silk, "Oh, but you started all of this, it's only fair that you reap the benefits as well. I've been saving something very nice for you, Ginevra." He picked up the pitcher that by this time had pieces of salad, floating in it and peas and potatoes sunk to the bottom.

Her eyes went wide. "Don't you dare, Harry Potter, if you know what is good..."

But she never finished that statement. Harry had her cornered against the balustrade and held the pitcher over her head. He looked at his son. "Think I should do it, Miki?"

He was laughing, and bouncing up and down in his chair. "Do it, do it, do it!"

Ginny glared. "Traitor!"

But Harry dropped the pitcher to the floor at Ginny's feet and collapsed in front of her.

He let out a groan of pain, and grabbed his left arm.

She was immediately on her knees, next to him. "Harry, what's wrong? Harry, talk to me."

He was breathless with the intensity of the pain. "I have to leave, my Master calls me!"

She grabbed his face and made him look at her. "Harry!" She shook him. "Harry, listen to me. You are a man of your word. You promised me, that you would not leave until you made a decision. Are you going to go against that?"

He refused to look at her. "But – I must!"

"No, you don't. This is not your decision, Harry. It is his. It is a compulsion. He thinks that you don't have a choice, but you do. Fight it, Harry. Please fight it."

"Mum."

She looked up into the calm face of her young son. "Let me." There was very little of the child standing there. She nodded, and Miki took Harry's arm. He placed his hand over the mark that Lucius had put there.

It was glowing hot and red, but the moment that Mikeal covered it with his hand, the pain quit. He continued to hold onto it, his eyes were closed, and his lips were moving, then there was a spark that snapped when he broke the hold he had on his daddy's arm.

Harry was breathless. It was pain like the Cruciatus Curse. Once he came back to himself, it seemed that he didn't know exactly where he was for a moment. Then he grabbed them both into a tight hug, and shed silent tears into Ginny's shoulder.

After a long time, the three of them stood up, and Ginny did the scourgify spell on all of them and the balcony. When she was finished she looked at her husband. "Are you all right?"

He nodded. "I will be." He turned to his son, "Miki, what did you do just before you let my arm go. There was a spark."

"Wolf told me that if I thought about it hard enough, that I could send a shock to the bad man that hurt you, daddy. So I did. Can we go on a ride on your broom, daddy? You told me, anytime I asked that you

would try. Can we, daddy, please, please, please? It's been so long since the last time." Then he leaned forward and whispered, only for Harry to hear. "Mum and me went for a ride once, but she had too many rules."

Harry chuckled. "Yes, she seems the type. Mum's are like that." Then he looked up at Ginny with question in his eyes. "What do you think, mum?"

She looked at the hopeful face of her son then back to Harry. "Do you feel up to it Harry. With all the potions they gave you and this call?" She indicated his arm. "Do you think..."

"I'm fine, Ginny, the question is, do you trust me enough to allow me to take him?"

"I...well...I...Sure, go ahead. Get out of here!"

Mikeal ran to the cupboard and grabbed the broom. "C'mon, daddy, let's go."

Harry kissed Ginny on the forehead. "He'll be safe. Don't worry."

Ginny smiled and nodded. "I know he will be."

Chapter 39 - Chess

Three hours later, they still weren't back. Ginny was pacing in the kitchen, George was yelling at her. "How could you have let him take Mikeal? I know you love him, Ginevra, but you aren't usually this foolish."

She spun on her brother and growled. "Don't you dare, George, just don't you dare. Mikeal is his son. I did what I thought was best. I don't particularly care if you like it or not. I know you love Miki, George, but you can't keep him from his father! I won't allow it, do you understand?"

"There are an awful lot of things that you won't allow when it comes to Harry, I wonder if you are thinking straight?"

"That is none of your business, George. If I hadn't stepped in they would have Obliviated him."

"Well, maybe that would have been best. Look Gin..."

"Ginny did what was best for me, and for her."

Ginny spun around and went and hugged both Mikeal and Harry. Harry put a protective arm around his wife and looked at George.

"I don't know who you are. From the looks, I would say that you are one of her brothers. So with that supposition, I am willing to overlook the fact that you were yelling at your sister. You should know that when I give my word, it is set in stone. I promised Ginny that Miki would be safe, and as you can obviously see, he is."

Harry took up what Ginny would in the future call his Death Eater stance. He stood straight, lean and broad shouldered and had a commanding presence that could not be discounted or ignored; he was definitely a leader of men.

Harry's eyes narrowed, and he looked directly at George. "Now, there are some things that I won't tolerate. This is our home, this is her home, and I will not tolerate her being attacked in it. Ginny is by far

the wisest person I have met, I have learned to trust her judgment, perhaps you should do the same.

“As far as Miki is concerned, he is my son. That needs to be established in your mind before we go any farther.”

“I don’t dispute that you are his father, Harry. What I have a problem with is his safety. What about the call you received this afternoon? What will you do if you are with Miki when that happens again; and mark my words, it will happen again.”

“That, is none of your business. I don’t particularly care if this situation makes you uncomfortable, George. This is my family, and I will do as is necessary. As far as you are concerned, I owe you nothing, therefore I give you nothing. You are welcome to stay here as long as you do not trouble my wife any. If you do, I will invite you to leave my home. Am I understood?”

George growled through gritted teeth. “Perfectly, and let me make one thing clear to you, Death Eater...”

Ginny gasped. “George, How dare you...”

But he ignored her and continued glaring at Harry. “...If anything happens to either of them, I will hunt you down. Am I understood?”

Harry’s eyes narrowed. “Perfectly.”

Ron walked in during the stand off and looked from George to Harry.

Ginny looked at Ron. “Get George out of here for a while, Ron.” Then she walked up and slapped George in the face. “Don’t you EVER call Harry that again, George.” She spun around and took Miki’s hand and took him upstairs to the bathroom and began running a bath for him.

“Mum, why were Uncle George and daddy fighting?”

She stopped a minute and looked at her son. “I’m not certain, Miki. Uncle George loves you an awful lot and since daddy has been sick, he doesn’t think daddy can take care of you as well as he should. Uncle George is wrong, you know.”

"I know, mum. We had fun today, mum. We flied around on daddy's broom, and we sat down by our tree and talked. We fell asleep under the tree." Miki giggled. "Daddy said you would skin us alive if we didn't get back soon. So we came back. Are you going to skin us alive, mum?"

"Naaa. Is it nice to have daddy home again, sweetheart?"

He nodded. "I missed him so much, mum. I don't want him to leave ever again."

"Me either, baby. Now, let's finish up this bath and get your pajamas on. Then you can go downstairs and say good night to everyone."

After she got Miki tucked into bed, she returned to the bedroom to find Harry sitting outside. She leaned against the door and folded her arms. "Did you have fun today?"

He turned in his chair and smiled at her, and patted his knee. "C'mere, Ginny."

She sat on his lap and put her arms around his neck.

"I'm sorry for frightening you."

"You didn't frighten me, Harry."

"Ginny, please don't lie to me. I could see the relief in your eyes when I walked in."

With a sigh she answered him. "Alright, I was a little frightened, Harry, but not for the reasons you think. You promised me that Miki would be safe, and I didn't worry another moment about him. It was you that I was worried about."

He smiled. "Me?"

"Yeah you, ya big goof."

"Why were you worried about me?"

“Well, let’s think about this, shall we? This morning you were in the hospital, fed Merlin knows what potions, you were barely able to function, rescued from Obliviation, brought to a home that you don’t remember, re-introduced to your son, endured a call from Malfoy, and took your son for a joy ride on your broom. It’s too much.”

They were quiet for a while, then Harry shifted so that he could look at her. “I remembered the first time I took Miki for a ride. Well actually, I remembered that you were furious with me. I’m a little fuzzy on the details, but...” His voice was quiet and she looked at him and couldn’t help herself, she kissed him. “Oh, I’m sorry Harry, I know that you aren’t...”

“That I’m not what? Ready for physical contact. I beg to differ.” He took her face into his hands and gently took her lips.

Ginny deepened the kiss as Harry threaded his fingers through her hair. Then without warning he stopped with a frown on his face, stood her to her feet and walked to the railing.

Ginny followed, then put a hand on his back and gently massaged the suddenly tightening muscles there. “Tell me, Love.”

He looked out over the ocean, his expression was cautious. “I remember...” then he turned and faced her, “I remember you putting the Cruciatus Curse on me. I remember you telling me that you hated me because...” Harry searched for the memory, but continued on in frustration. “...I can’t remember what you said.”

“Maybe it was that I said I hated you because you killed Miki?”

Harry thought for a moment then nodded. “Yes, that’s it. But Miki isn’t...”

She smiled and leaned her head against his arm. “Let me ask you something, Harry. If you were trying to brainwash someone; someone that had shown considerable resistance to all previous efforts, wouldn’t you make a mockery of the very things that your victim was holding on to? Namely, me and Miki? Lucius used poly-juice potion to have someone impersonate the two of us.”

“But if you really weren’t there, how do you know what happened?”

“Miki. His spirit guides took him in spirit to where Lucius had you held prisoner. Of course he couldn’t interfere, but he could see. When he came back he told us everything that was happening to you. He also told us what the surrounding area looked like. We spent a lot of time researching for matching aspects of the description that Miki was giving us.”

“So Miki, found me?”

“No, not precisely. Harry, do you think it is wise...”

“Ginny, I want to know what happened. Now, please.”

She looked into his eyes and knew there would be no putting him off. She sighed. “All right, Harry, but some of it is likely to make you angry.”

“I have news for you, Ginny, most of it is likely to make me angry.”

They sat down and Ginny kept hold of his hand. “I guess it all starts with Draco.”

Harry turned and looked at her in surprise. “Wait a minute, you know Draco?”

Ginny nodded. “Draco, is Moira’s husband.”

“You mean – he lived – here? Under my roof?”

Ginny nodded.

Harry got up and started to pace. He was only beginning to understand, how deep Draco’s betrayal went. “Go on, Ginny, you might as well give it all to me, from the very beginning.”

So, Ginny told him everything that she knew. “Back in October, of your sixth year at Hogwarts, Draco came to you wanting to talk to you alone. He asked if the two of you could find someplace quiet.

I know this because, he did it in front of the entire Gryffindor table in the Great Hall.

Ron was livid that he would come to you at all. I don't know if you have noticed, but Ron has a bit of a temper. Anyway, you looked Draco up and down and studied him for a little while. You didn't answer and went back to eating. Then he just stood there.

"You finished eating, got up and left the Great Hall with Ron and Hermione."

"Over the next couple of weeks, Draco was everywhere. He seemed to haunt you. Ron threatened him several times. I remember one time when you, Ron, Hermione and I were walking to the Great Hall for lunch. Draco was following like a puppy dog.

"I guess Ron had had enough of Draco, following you around everywhere, so he put him up against a wall and pointed his wand directly at Draco's throat. Hermione and I had to hold Ron back. You know, pull him off Malfoy. I think that Hermione took Ron's wand from him. I don't remember, it's been a long time ago.

"Anyway, you finally looked at Draco and asked him what he wanted and to get it over with because you were hungry."

"He said, I told you, Potter, I want the two of us to go somewhere so we can talk."

"Again, you looked at him for a long time before saying, 'the lake, after dinner tomorrow night.'

"He only nodded, straightened his robes and looked at you. Then he asked you, 'Why not tonight?' You laughed and looked him right in the eye and said, 'because you want it.'

Harry laughed at this point in Ginny's narration. "I must have been a real Git."

Ginny smiled. "No, you had just been through the loss of someone very dear to you and you were – um – I guess, depressed, is a good word. Once Sirius died..."

Harry interrupted her. "Sirius, now that name sounds somehow, familiar. Ginny who was Sirius and what was he to me?"

"Sirius Black was your parent's best friend and your godfather. Harry, Sirius is a whole other story. Which one do you want first?"

"Well, I think that Draco is more pertinent to the present situation. We can talk about Sirius later."

"All right. Ahh – once Sirius died, you were different. You were less apt to put up with school boy pranks and petty rivalries. You changed after that. You took charge of situations around you. I guess you had decided that you weren't going to react to things around as much as act.

"True to your word, the next night after dinner, you walked down to the lake. Malfoy was waiting for you there. Ron and Hermione went with you but stayed back. They weren't willing to leave you alone with Draco.

"I can't tell you what Draco said or did by the lake that night. But after that, things changed. You began to include Draco, in things that the three of you were doing."

Harry laughed. "I bet Ron didn't like that."

Ginny giggled. "No, he didn't. But you were firm in your decision and didn't let anyone sway you. A lot of the Gryffindors were put out, that you were allowing Draco Malfoy to hang around with you. The Slytherin's weren't too happy either. Both of you were the butt of pranks from the rival houses. Once again, you didn't care. Draco didn't handle it as well as you did, but by the end of the term, the two of you had pretty much united to two houses. Dumbledore was thrilled."

"In seventh year, you defeated Voldemort. Ron, Hermione, Draco and I were at your side. As were the DA."

"DA?"

“Defense Association. You, Ron and Hermione formed a secret society for anyone who wanted to learn Defense Against The Dark Arts in fifth year.” Ginny could see the question forming on his lips and held up her hand with a smile. “That is another whole story. Let’s get this one done first.”

“Alright, go on.”

“Without going into a lot of detail, you defeated Voldemort. It was a terrible battle. Nobody came out of it unscathed. There was a battle going on all around us. Aurors and teachers and wizards from all over were fighting Death Eaters; but the focus of the battle was your fight with Voldemort.”

“You won. I don’t know how; but you won. After Voldemort’s fall, a Death Eater tried to kill you. Nearly succeeded too. You spent weeks in St. Mungo’s, in a coma. Draco never left your side. No one could make him leave.” Ginny shook her head at the thought.

Then she continued. “After that, no one questioned Draco’s right to be in your company. After you left school, you went directly into Auror training. Draco went with you. The two of you were inseparable.

“At this point, Ron was feeling a bit left out. You were dating Hermione, and in fact had asked her to marry you. Draco had more in common with you at this point and Ron was feeling left out. I’m afraid that the two of you had a bit of a falling out. After a while you began to talk to each other again, but it was different somehow.”

“Anyway, you and Draco ended up not only being partners in training but partners out in the field as well. The ATC officials decided that the two of you worked so well together that to give you new partners when you graduated would have been a travesty. You knew each other so well. You could almost read each other’s minds.”

At this, Harry snorted in disgust at himself. “Not well enough evidently.”

Ginny smiled sadly at him. “None of us suspected him, Harry. Anyway, the story from here gets a little sketchy. You married

Hermione. Ron was your best man and Draco was a groomsman. You continued to go on missions for the ministry.

At this point, Ginny decided to tread lightly. She wasn't going to put Ron in Harry's bad graces. As far as she knew, he and Ron hadn't even talked yet.

"Your marriage with Hermione, didn't work out. You left the ministry and came to Hawaii. Draco followed you."

Harry snorted. "What? Was he in love with me or something? Didn't I think that it was odd, that Draco would be in the same place as me? Was I daft?"

Ginny shook her head. "Draco told you that he had received a threatening letter from his father and was relocating."

"You should know, Harry, that the relationship that you and Draco had was a different one. Despite the fact that you two were obviously friends, there was always that thread of animosity between the two of you. It was almost like neither one of you wanted to give up the rivalry and weren't going to let your friendship spoil all of your fun."

"Now that is just...sick."

"Sick, Harry, but true." She giggled.

"Alright, so you've explained my relationship to Draco. What changed, and when did it change?"

"That's the sad part, Harry. As far as Draco was concerned it never changed. It was always Draco's objective to hurt you. It was the incident back in fifth year that sparked all of this. It was when Sirius died and Lucius Malfoy got sent to Azkaban.

"And my Mas..." he gritted his teeth, "...Lucius and Draco had this planned from when?"

"Since your sixth year, when you were 16."

"And my age is what now?"

"In July you will be 25."

"That's an awfully long time for a grudge, and I was so stupid that I fell for it, hook, line, and sinker."

"What would have made you think otherwise, Harry? I told you what the two of you meant to each other."

"I didn't want to interrupt you earlier, but you said that I got married..."

"To Hermione, yes."

He searched his memory then shook his head. "Who the bloody hell, is Hermione?"

"She was part of the golden trio and your first wife. You divorced her, that's the one good thing that has come out of this."

"You didn't like her?"

"At one time I did. But when she cheated on you, I changed my opinion."

Harry shook his head. "I've led quite a sordid life, haven't I?"

She put a loving hand on his cheek. "That isn't even a fraction of it, and still you came out of it a remarkable man."

Harry laughed. "There's more? I don't want to hear it right now. I don't think I could handle it."

Ginny smiled. "Yeah, maybe a little at a time would be better." She stood and ran her hands through her hair. "Well, it's been a long and tiring day for you, Harry. I should go and let you get some rest."

"Just woke up from a long nap, remember." He walked over to her. "Ginny. I want you to stay with me tonight. Please, just lay here and talk to me. You can tell me about our good times together. Tell me about, adopting Miki. I just – don't want to be alone right now. I would never have admitted it in the hospital, but your presence there was a real comfort to me."

She looked at him and his expression was bordering on panic. "Harry, if you want me to stay, of course I'll stay."

He seemed to be comforted by her words and relaxed a bit. With a smile and a caress of his cheek, she said, "I'll be right back, Harry." Harry sighed with relief. He wasn't ready to meet his demons once again in his dreams.

Harry looked through the drawers, searching for pajamas to change into. He found the bottoms of a pair that he particularly liked, but search as he did, could not find the tops. He went to the bedroom door and called, "Ginny, can you come here a minute." He went back to rummaging through the drawers when Ginny came running, concern showing on her face. "What's wrong, Harry?"

Harry turned and looked at Ginny with a frown on his face, then he stopped and laughed. He held up the pj bottoms with one finger, "I was looking for the other half of these, but I swear that you look a far sight better in them than I do.

Ginny turned red and stammered for a couple of minutes. Just out of pure mischievousness Harry let her feel uncomfortable. When she looked into his eyes and saw that he was teasing, she straightened up, put her chin in the air and smiled. "Damn right I do. It's what I've worn since..." she looked at the floor, "...It was all I had of you, Harry." There were tears in her eyes now.

Harry took one step toward her and Ginny closed the distance at a run. He opened his arms to her and let her jump into them and spread hungry kisses across his face.

"I've missed you so, Harry." She continued to spread kisses until she noticed that he wasn't returning them. Then she stepped back, her eyes wide with the hurt she felt. "I'm sorry, Harry. I should go." She started backing toward the door. "I forgot, I'm sorry. You must think I'm horrible. I'm so sorry. Please, forgive me. Healer Ozbourne said..." She turned and ran out the door and went back to her room and threw herself on the bed and cried.

Harry stood there in shock. Not because of Ginny's actions, but because he had just had a flash of something that he was trying to

identify. He looked at the closed door and knew that he should go and talk to her, but he didn't want to encourage false hopes. Very un-Death Eater of him, he knew, but him, none the less; and that, he knew, was a start in the right direction.

He looked at the huge bed and sighed, he didn't relish the long night that was ahead of him. Sleep brought dreams, dreams brought visions of things that he didn't understand. He was smart enough to realize that these were probably things that his mind had blocked out, but they were dark and ugly and he didn't know how to put them in their proper place. As a result, they haunted his night times.

Ginny had been in the hospital room most nights, and would whisper soft words of encouragement and wipe a cool wet cloth across his face. But the visions would not go away. The prospect of tonight didn't look any better.

He found another pair of pj's, and a robe and made his way down to the library that Ginny had pointed out earlier in the day. He chose a book and sat down in a comfortable seat to read, hopefully to dispel any unwanted visions.

"Weel', yer back and welcom' ye be. Tis goo' ta ha'e ye back again. Did ye fare weel', laddie? Yer, goo' laidy says 'at ye were taken agin' yer will."

With a sigh, Harry closed his book, stood and addressed the ghost. "Please sir, I assume that by the way you have addressed me, that you know me. You have me at a loss. You see, I don't remember ever meeting you? I do apologize sir, and I mean no disrespect.

"Aye, yer goo' laidy said tha' ye were a bit addled."

Harry chuckled. "Yes, I guess you could say that. Perhaps you could talk with me for a while sir. I have many questions and I'm not certain who around here I can trust."

The ghost cocked his head, and looked strangely at him. "Aye, I can answer any questions ye may ha', but let me ask ye laddie, how can ye trust what I say, if ye don' know me?"

Harry laughed. "You have a point there. Maybe if I get the same story enough times, I'll begin to believe it all."

"'Tis solid logic but fer one thin' laddie, we may all be tellin' th' same story by design."

Harry looked at the ghost. "That's true enough I suppose, but what alternative do I have?"

"Le' yer dreams and visions tell ye th' story."

Harry sat back down. "I don't like what I see when I sleep. I would rather not visit there if I can avoid it."

"Then yer answer will avoid you, laddie. So, whilst ye ponder on th' problem, I challenge ye to a game 'o chess, if ye air feelin' up to it."

Harry beamed a smile and rubbed his hands together. "Brilliant!" Then he looked at the ghost with a twinkle in his eye. "I'll set up, shall I?"

Tavish let out a hearty laugh. "Aye, lad. An' ye jus' be awatchin' at mouth 'o yers noo."

They played deep into the night and Harry lost every game. While they played, Tavish told Harry everything from the time when he and Draco had come to the Manor the first time, to sitting playing chess together at that moment.

It was obvious to Harry that Tavish spared no more feeling for Draco than he did. The two were quiet for a while and Harry noticed that the dawn was just beginning. Tavish then cocked his head and looked at Harry. "I weel say, laddie, 'at 'ur bairn tol' me 'at 'th dragon helped git ye back. I don' know as I believe 'eet. I thin' 'e's up ta somethin'" Harry thought carefully about what Tavish said. Then, with a sigh, picked up his glass of brandy, swirled it around a bit then downed the contents. "I do have good taste though. This is excellent. Maybe if I drink enough of this stuff, I'll sleep undisturbed."

“‘Tis a goo’ possibility laddie, but ‘twood ten’ moor ‘tward bad dreams. Noo, me own Becky is awonderin’ where I’ve been off too. I’ll bid ye goo’ night, laddie. Find wha’ ye air lookin’ fer soon.”

“Thank you, Tavish, you are very good company.”

Harry returned to his room and sat on the balcony, staring at the beautiful pinks and purples of the sunrise and sighed. He knew he was going to have to explain to Ginny what happened last night, but he really didn’t want to. She tended to worry too much. He didn’t think that she realized that he would have to ultimately be the one to work through all this. There wasn’t much more she could do, than be there for support.

He sighed and stood to leave the balcony when Miki came in.

When he saw his daddy, he ran and threw himself into his arms. Harry held him close and buried his face in the boy’s hair. Unbidden, tears came to his eyes but he quickly blinked them back and looked at the smiling face of his son.

Mikeal looked deep into Harry’s eyes, put his hands over each of Harry’s temples and touched his forehead with his own. Harry felt something that he had never felt before. It was like a surge of energy, gently messaging and relaxing him. When he finally pulled his hands away, Harry smiled but looked confused. “What was that, Miki?”

“Wolf said you needed to have peace. Do you feel better daddy?”

Harry stopped for a moment and realized that he did indeed feel better. “Yes, Miki, thank you.”

Harry put him down and Miki took his hand. “Grandma Molly makes good brefast daddy. You want some?”

Harry smiled. “Sure mate, let’s go.”

Chapter 40 - Realizations

Miki pulled his hand and they went to the kitchen. "Gramma Molly, Gramma Molly, I'm gonna have brefast with daddy today!"

She smiled. "How wonderful, Miki. Hello, Harry dear." She patted his cheek, did you sleep well?"

"Um – well, not really – um – ma'am."

She looked at him sympathetically. "Harry, I'm mum. Call me, mum, all right?"

Harry looked at her and smiled. "Thanks – mum," Then he kissed her cheek.

She bustled over to the stove all the while talking over her shoulder. "All of this is going to take some getting used to, dear. Give yourself time. In the mean time, have some griddle cakes."

He lifted Miki high into the air, and settled him into a chair, much to Miki's delight.

The two of them began to eat and Ron stumbled to the table. Both Harry and Ron looked at each other curiously. Molly looked pointedly at Ron, and nodded her head toward Harry.

"Ahh...I know you don't remember me, Harry, but I'm Ron."

Harry smiled and stuck out his hand.

"Bloody hell, this is weird," Ron said as he shook Harry's hand.

"Ronald Weasley, watch your language!"

"Sorry, mum."

Ron looked back at Harry who was still smiling, but concentrating on his pancakes, "What?"

"Sorry, but I spent the night playing chess with Tavish. Did you know that he calls you 'Sir Ronald the Red'?"

Ron rolled his eyes. "Yeah, he started calling me that after I beat him, three times in a row. He had been drinking from that flask he carries, and he was a little tipsy." Ron laughed at the memory. "He drew his sword and knighted me. Do you have any idea how disconcerting it is to have a drunken ghost waving a sword at you? Never mind that it was a ghostly sword." Ron shuddered at the memory. "Ever since then, he has called me, Sir Ronald the Red. Barmy old duffer."

"Unka Ron, daddy tak m fer a rie on hif boom yessaday." All three adults in the room looked at him, "Miki, don't talk with your mouth full."

His eyes got wide, and he swallowed. "Sorry."

Ron cleared his throat. "Ahh...Harry, I need to talk to you, can we go for a walk?"

Harry looked at his mother-in-law. "Mum, can Miki stay with you. I think Ginny, is still asleep."

"Of course Harry, go on."

He looked at Miki. "Hey, Mate, daddy is going to talk to Uncle Ron. I'll be back. OK?"

Miki nodded. "OK, daddy."

Harry and Ron, walked out the door and into the glorious Hawaiian morning; but Ron wasn't looking at the scenery, we was looking at the ground.

Harry watched him then rolled his eyes. "So, what's up – Sir Ron?" Harry smirked.

Ron looked at him and laughed. "Merlin, I've missed you, Harry." Then he sighed, "Harry, there are some things that you should know, things that you need to hear from me."

"I've found, Ron, that if you have something unpleasant to say, the best thing to do is to just say it and get it over with."

“Right. OK, here goes. About two years ago – Merlin this is hard – anyway, you had been gone on a mission for the Ministry of Magic, for six months. Well, I made a huge mistake. I was with Hermione.”

“Ginny mentioned Hermione last night. I don’t remember her though. When you say you were with Hermione...”

Ron turned bright red.

Harry nodded in understanding. “Ahh, I see. So, you, my mate, and my wife, Hermione, went behind my back while I was on a mission. You didn’t have the decency to tell me face to face, rather, you thought it was better to sneak around. Is that about right?”

Ron was blushing to his very roots now. “That’s about it, Harry.”

“What happened? Did I come home sooner than expected?”

He nodded. “We weren’t expecting you for another week. We planned on sitting down and talking to you, but – we never got the chance.”

Harry put his hands behind his back and began walking again. “It seems that my life is one constant betrayal after another.”

Ron had no answer for him, he just walked beside him in silence for a long while.

Then Harry turned to him. “Why are you telling me this now? I don’t remember any of it. You could have just let it go and I never would have known.”

Ron sighed. “Because, Harry, I firmly believe that you are going to get your memory back, eventually. I didn’t want to let another opportunity go by without trying to make things right. It’s really almost cheating on my part. You wouldn’t talk to me before; in fact you wouldn’t even stay in the same room with me, before all this happened. I am taking advantage of your lack of knowledge to tell you all of this; to let you know how sorry I am that I hurt you and that I would do anything to make it up to you.”

Ron stopped walking, and put a hand on Harry's arm. "Harry, I'm not asking you to forgive me. I think that is too much to ask anyone, but I do want you to know how sorry I am, and how much I regret my behavior. We were best mates, and I made a royal mess of things. I miss our friendship, I think, more than anything else." Ron sighed and turned to leave. "I just thought you should know." Ron turned to leave Harry standing there.

"Ron, you didn't say anything about Hermione. What does she think about all of this?"

Ron chuckled humorlessly. "Who bloody knows? She's off somewhere with a globetrotting reporter for the daily prophet."

Harry's eyebrows came together in confusion. "So she did the same thing to you?"

Ron waved a hand. "No. I broke it off with her. In fact it was at your's and Ginny's wedding reception. I couldn't take the bitching anymore. She was never satisfied with anything. She's changed from when we were in school, Harry. I don't like her much now."

Ron turned away again, but Harry called him back. "Sounds like you did me a favor, Ron."

"What did you say?"

Harry stared at him across the distance. "I said, it sounds like you did me a favor. I can't imagine the person you have described, being there like Ginny has been. I'll tell you Ron, I don't remember anything from before – before..."

"Your abduction?"

Harry nodded. "I guess. That's where the problem is. Ron, I am a Death Eater, I have been for as long as I can remember. I am quickly coming to the realization that that period of time is short, but still, it's all I know. Being here, with Ginny and Miki..." He shook his head. "I want so badly to believe it all. The Manor, the life that I've supposedly built here, my family, you, all of it, I just don't know if I can; and I really don't know if I have the time to work it all out."

Ron furrowed his eyebrows. "What do you mean you don't have the time?"

Harry grabbed his shoulders. "Listen to me, Ron." Harry rolled up his sleeve and pointed to the black mark that marred his skin. "This is a link between my Master, and me. When he calls, I must obey. He has already summoned me once since I've been here. Surprisingly enough, it was Miki that prevented me from leaving. When he calls, it is a compulsion so strong that it is next to impossible to resist.

"If he calls me again, and I am alone – I – I – don't know what will happen; but I do know one thing, if I go, I will not come back. I need something strong to hold onto, Ron. I need to believe..." Harry shook his head. "...No not believe, I need to KNOW that Ginny and Miki are mine. I need to know, that you are mine and all of your brothers your mum your dad – I need to be able to hold onto that. I really want to remember my 'before', Ron. I've come a ways. One of the things that Draco said before the Aurors grabbed me, was that there is always a 'before'. I've thought about that over and over again. He is right, there is always 'before'."

Harry was getting desperate and it was showing in his eyes. "Ron, you have to help me. If you really want to make up for everything, help me."

Ron grabbed Harry into a bear hug. "I won't let you go mate. I promise."

"I need to talk to Ginny."

"Well, she's in the house, let's go"

The two men entered the kitchen, to find Ginny sitting there crying. Her eyes were red and swollen as if she had been crying all night. Harry stooped down and brushed her hair out of her eyes, kissed her on the cheek and whispered. "Come with me, Ginny."

She looked at him. "No."

"Yes, now."

Ron rolled his eyes and looked pointedly at Harry. Harry sighed. "Please, Ginny, I really need to talk to you."

It may have been the desperation in his voice that got her attention, or it may have been the fact that he was rubbing a hand up and down her arm, but whatever it was, she looked at him and nodded her head.

He took her hand and almost dragged her through the hall and up the stairs to their room.

"Harry, slow down!"

He didn't. Not until they were in their room. He closed the door behind them and placed a silencing charm on the room and a locking spell on the door. Then he turned to Ginny. She was curious as to what he was up to, but also a little frightened.

Harry paced for a while then turned to her. "Ginny, Ron and I just had a long talk. He told me what happened between Hermione and him. He told me what has happened to Hermione since then as well. But the one thing he didn't *have* to tell me was the fact that, that single event, in my former life, was probably the best thing that ever happened to me.

He ran his hand through his hair in frustration. "Ginny, do you understand what I am trying to say to you? In my clumsy way I am telling you that *you*, are the best thing that has ever happened to me. I'm trying to tell you that, if it hadn't been for you, I would have been lost. If it weren't for you, I would have been Obliviated." His voice became soft and he walked to her. "If it weren't for you, I wouldn't be alive.

"You are a treasure beyond all treasures. I don't remember our life before –

yet, but I believe that it happened; but until I *know*, we need to start making new memories." He sighed. "I'm not saying this very wel..."

He was interrupted by Ginny throwing her arms around his neck and brushing a soft kiss on his lips. He deepened the kiss and realized, with some amazement, that everything in his life, centered on her.

They came apart and Ginny whispered against his lips. "You were saying, Harry?" She spread tiny kisses along his jaw line as he tried to remember what he had been saying.

"Who the hell cares, talking is way over-rated." He lowered his mouth to hers again and made her forget everything but him.

Chapter 41 – Another Attack

Ginny stretched lazily, and reached out a hand to caress Harry's chest, and found only an empty space next to her, and an impression in the pillow where Harry had laid his head.

She grabbed her robe and looked around the room as she put it on. "Harry?" She checked the loo, and the hallway, before going out onto the balcony. That's where she found him, sitting in a corner, on the floor, knees pulled up to his chest and shaking like a leaf. He stared, unseeing at the railing around him and hugged himself as if for warmth. Ginny ran and got Ron then stopped and dampened a cloth.

When she ran back to the balcony, Harry's head shot up, and he stared at her as if he was a deranged animal. He scrambled to the other corner when Ron ran in.

"Bloody hell."

"He's still asleep, Ron. He's having a nightmare." Ginny slowly approached him and sat in front of him, keeping her movements slow and easy. "Tell me what you see, Harry."

He squeezed his eyes closed as if to shut out what he was seeing.

"No Harry, don't fight it. Let it come."

Ron looked at his sister as if she had grown two heads. "Are you around the bend, Gin."

She ignored Ron, and scooted closer to Harry. "Let it come, Harry. It's all right. I'm here. Don't fight it." She was finally close enough to wipe his forehead with the cloth she held and he jerked away from her. "It's all right, Harry. Be still."

He looked at her as if seeing her for the first time since this started, then he broke down and cried. She held him for a long time, whispering nonsense words, kissing his forehead."

When he finally calmed, he leaned his head against Ginny's. "I'm sorry, Ginny. I'm so sorry."

"There's nothing to be sorry about, Harry. Do you feel like going in?"

At Harry's nod, she waved Ron over, and the two of them helped him stand. His knees seemed to want to buckle underneath him and Ron helped steady him until they got him to a chair in the room.

Ron touched his arm. "Mate, that was bloody awful. Does that happen often?"

Ginny nodded, then turned when the door squeaked open. "Daddy needs my help, mum."

Ginny nodded again. "Yes, he does baby. Come here."

He crawled up into Harry's lap and gave him a kiss and a hug. Harry's arm came around him and held his little boy. "Don't worry so, Miki. Daddy will be fine in no time, OK?" Miki nodded his head and frowned.

Ginny looked at her son with concern. "What's going on, Miki?"

"Mum, wolf said that daddy needed help with his arm; but he doesn't."

Ron looked at his friend. "Harry, did Lucius call for you?"

"No, not yet anyway. That was just a ruddy dream." No sooner had he said it and the mark on his arm began to burn. "Bloody hell, not now!" He grabbed Ginny's hand. "Tell me about – something, anything, Ginny. Tell me about school.

"Do you remember your fourth year? The Tri-Wizard Tournament was that year. You liked Cho Chang. You wanted to take her to the Yule Ball. I was so jealous."

Sweat was showing on his face again. "I must go to my Master, Ginny. I'm sorry, but..."

Miki grabbed his face, "No, daddy, you won't." He took Harry's arm and once again put his hands on the burning mark. With his eyes closed and his lips moving, the burning began to recede; but still he held onto the spot. Harry held stock still, while Miki held his arm.

Suddenly, Harry felt a long steady stream of electricity go through his body. When Mikeal finally let go of him, Harry looked at him in shock. "Ow, Mate. What did you do?"

Miki lifted one side of his mouth in a smile. "I got that bloody rat bastard for hurting you, daddy."

"MIKEAL POTTER! Don't you ever talk like that again, do you understand me young man?"

Miki looked at his mum with tears in his eyes. "Did I do something wrong, mum?"

"Exactly where did you hear those words, Mikeal?"

"That's what Uncle George said, mum. "That he wanted to go after that blo..."

Harry squeezed him tight and put a finger over his mouth. "Hey, Mate, I think mum gets the point.

Ginny stood up with fire in her eyes. "Oh, I see." she looked at Harry. "You OK?"

At Harry's nod, she spun around and headed for the door.

After she left, both Ron and Harry started laughing.

"I have a feeling that Uncle George is in for it. Miki, those words aren't very nice to say."

Ron ruffled the boy's hair. "Yeah, kid, I still get into trouble. If you know what's good for you, you won't say them again in front of your mum.

Harry shifted in the chair, and looked at his son. "Now, what exactly did you do?"

"Last time, wolf told me words to say and it sent a shock back to the bad man. This time, he gave me new words to say, and told me that I

had ta hold your arm to do it. Wiggly blue lines came out of the bad mans wand and went all over him. Then he fell on the floor.

“Bloody hell.” Ron said.

“Uncle Ron, you’re gonna get in trouble.”

Chapter 42 – Patrick Branigan

Harry had been out of the hospital for two weeks; and every night had been the same. Ginny would find him pacing the room, or sitting on the balcony, quietly staring into space, or in the worse cases, in a state of panic that ripped at her heart.

He spent very little time out of the room. Being around people tended to irritate him immensely. So to avoid what he coined as, his Death Eater tendencies, he kept himself hidden or occasionally went to sit with Tavish in the library.

He did take Mikeal flying everyday. He enjoyed the solitude time with Miki. He also took the opportunity to get to know about his son's rare gift. He and Ron were frequently together as well.

Professor Dumbledore was a frequent visitor to Potter Manor and checked on Harry's progress. Ginny told him of his sleepless nights and that it was only in pure exhaustion that he ever got any sleep.

The Professor smiled and patted Ginny's cheek. "My dear, I believe I have a solution for the dear boy. That is of course if he is willing, it will not work otherwise."

"What is it Professor?"

"Time regression. Muggles have been using it for centuries with varying results; but I believe that it may be just the answer that you are looking for. In fact that is why I asked to come today. Do you think that Harry would spare some time to talk to me about it?"

"He is still harboring most of the ill will about you, that was instilled in him during his time with Lucius; but I can certainly try."

As if on cue, Harry and Miki walked in fresh from a broom flight. They were both all smiles until Harry's eyes fell on Dumbledore. The smile dropped from his face and he took a deep breath and walked over to Ginny and kissed her on the cheek.

"Harry, the Professor has some good news for us. Can you sit with us and talk a moment?"

He studied the old man, then nodded once and sat at the table as far away from Dumbledore as he could. He crossed his legs and folded his arms and stared expectantly at him. "Well?"

Unfazed by the rude behavior, Dumbledore's eyes twinkled. "Harry, I've been doing some research on your problem, and I think I have a solution. Time regression is..."

Harry uncrossed his legs and arms and looked at the Professor. "Time regression? You mean going to a Muggle hypnotist?"

"That's exactly right, my boy."

Harry shook his head. "I thought that wizards minds were to – what's the word I'm looking for – organized – organized and ordered for it to work on us."

"Mostly you would be correct, strong willed people are often poor subjects for hypnosis, however there is a gentleman in Bristol, who specializes in working with wizards. You should know that this gentleman is a Muggle but has been working with wizards for more than 25 years."

Harry started chuckling and shaking his head. "A Muggle that treats wizards? Professor Dumbledore, I would expect nothing less from you. What makes you think that this will work?"

"This gentleman has much experience dealing with stubborn wizards." Harry's eyes narrowed and Dumbledore's twinkled. Then Harry laughed and shook his head. "Professor you do indeed have me pegged."

Ginny leaned over. "Does this mean that you will give it a try, Harry?"

"Why not? Nothing I'm doing is helping any."

Harry looked up at the older man and studied him for a long time. Ginny could almost see the inner workings of his mind trying to solve the dilemma that caused his feelings of ill will against Professor Dumbledore. Finally, Harry sighed. "Professor, I find that I don't care for you very much. I have all of these conflicting feelings about you,

and I don't know which ones to believe. I know you are trying to help me, and I appreciate that, but it's not easy to push aside all the old feelings. My Mas..." Harry closed his eyes shook his head, then started again. "Lucius Malfoy, drilled it into my head that you were not to be trusted; that you were evil. I am coming to realize that the things that he told me were only to manipulate me, however I have to figure out which of these feelings are real and which are fabricated by that madman. I mean, for all I know right now you and I could have been enemies and Malfoy only enhanced existing feelings. That's the way it is for every aspect of my life right now. There is so much in my head, and I am not capable of sifting through it all. As a result, I don't trust you, or anyone else for that matter, with the possible exception of my little family here." He reached for Ginny's hand that was resting on his shoulder, and gave it a squeeze.

With a sigh he looked back at the old man. "Professor, can you tell me, please, what kind of relationship you and I had before all this happened? The only thing I am absolutely certain of is that is was not a normal student-headmaster relationship."

Professor Dumbledore smiled, and the ever present twinkle seemed to grow. "You are questioning your situation, Harry. That is a step in the right direction. And you are indeed correct, my boy. Our friendship did not have the normal student-professor interaction, but then yours was a singularly unusual situation. I have greatly enjoyed our mutual dealings. I will however allow you to make your own judgments when your memories have been returned to their proper places. I will not poison the process by trying to plant my versions of memories. You will need to sift through and decipher those on your own. Until then..." He pulled a tin out of his pocket, opened it and offered it to Harry. "Lemon drop?"

Ginny giggled, and Harry laughed outright and took the proffered candy. He smiled at the old man and at once began to relax in his presence.

Two days later, Patrick Branigan was admitted to Potter Manor. When Ginny introduced herself, Patrick bowed over her hand and placed a kiss on her knuckle. Harry stuck out a hand that was taken

in a firm handshake of one that was confident of himself, and his talent.

“Good Afternoon, Mr. Potter. It is indeed a pleasure to meet you. Shall we get started?”

Harry looked at Ginny and shrugged. “All right, if you will follow me sir, I will take you into the library.”

Ginny smiled at him. “Would you care for a cup of tea, or coffee, Mr. Branigan?”

“Please dear girl, call me Patrick or Paddy if you prefer; and as to your offer, would you have something a wee bit stronger?”

Harry laughed. “Right this way, sir, I think I may have something that will warm you a bit. Ginny, are you coming?”

“Can I?”

“Of course, dear girl. You are as much a part of this, as the lad here.”

They entered the library and Harry poured his guest a drink and handed it to him. Paddy closed his eyes in ecstasy, then sat in the offered chair. “Very nice, very nice indeed.” Then he clapped his hands together. “Now, young man. I understand that you have some difficult problems that you are trying to work through?”

“Yes, I...”

He held up a hand. “You should know that we will not even begin to talk about those things until you feel absolutely comfortable talking to me. Hypnosis is a science that is based on trust between the two parties. At least for what we are doing. I’m sure you have seen or at least heard of stage hypnotists that put on a show and make people squawk like chickens?”

Harry shook his head. “Sorry, can’t say that I have, but then...”

“But then if you could remember we wouldn’t be here, correct?”

Harry laughed. "Something like that, yes."

"Please know, Harry, I am not going to ask you to squawk like a chicken."

Ginny laughed. "Well, there goes all my fun."

Harry looked at her, "You can be replaced, you know."

Ginny smirked. "Ahh but what would you do without me?"

His eyes took on a devilish glint. "Hum – maybe we should see."

Patrick laughed. "This is delightful. Humor is a good thing to have in a marriage. Anyway, as I was saying, we will not be starting directly into the sessions for a while yet. It is very important to have trust built up between the two of us. So, I will tell you about me and my background. And if you would like, I may even tell you my favorite secret about Albus." He waggled his eyebrows and both Harry and Ginny laughed.

They visited for about an hour before Patrick stood up. "Well, Harry, Ginny, I will be back tomorrow."

"Paddy, where are you staying, we have more than enough room here."

The hypnotist waved that away. "That is indeed a very kind offer, I have no doubt that exploring this marvelous manor would be absolutely delightful, however, I'm going to go down to the beach. After all, that's where all the beautiful girls are. I've never been to Hawaii before, so I am going to make the most of it while I'm here."

Once he left and Ginny had closed the door, she laughed and hugged Harry. "Well, this should be interesting, anyway."

"I like him."

Ginny put her arms around his waist. "Good, I do too. Now, Miki won't be home for another two hours, why don't you and I go..." She let her voice trail off

“I’m right behind you.” Then he mimicked Patrick’s slight Irish accent. “After all that’s where the most beautiful girl is.”

Her eyes twinkled. “And Harry, I promise not to ask you to squawk like a chicken.”

“That’s it, wench.” Then he chased her up the stairs.

&

Harry traced a finger down Ginny’s arm and he buried his face in her hair. She cuddled a bit closer. “Harry, I’ve missed this so much. I’ve missed you, so much.”

Before he could respond, his left arm started burning. “Merlin, that bastard’s at it again.”

Alarmed, Ginny grabbed his shoulders. “Harry, hang on. It won’t last long.”

A thin sheen of sweat appeared on his forehead and upper lip. He lay there gasping for breath and willing the pain to ebb, but it seemed to go on forever.

Finally, the pain slowly subsided before it stopped all together, and Harry sighed in relief. “I can’t allow that to continue, Ginny. I’ve got to do something!” He got up and pulled a robe on. “Maybe Professor Dumbledore will have a suggestion. Ginny we need to contact him – today.”

Ginny lay in their bed with her head propped on her hand, smiling like a Cheshire cat. “Yes, Harry, we’ll call him today.”

Harry looked at her with a half smile and a lot of confusion, showing on his face. “What, may I ask is there to smile about?”

She got up, put her robe on and went and sat in Harry’s lap. She ran a finger around his face and kissed his temple. “You do realize what just happened here don’t you?”

He shook his head.

“You called him, ‘that bastard’ and not ‘my master’; and on top of that you just went through that and didn’t once try to leave here. I’d say that that is a huge step in the right direction.”

Harry looked at her with his eyebrows furrowed, then shook his head. “Huh, now that’s something. Yeah, even though the pain was worse than normal, I didn’t feel as compelled to leave this time. Maybe things are improving.”

She kissed him. “Maybe, you are beginning to believe.”

He was quiet for a minute then looked at her. “And I *believe* that we have another 45 minutes, why waste it?” He captured her lips and in one swift movement, stood and took his wife back to bed.

Chapter 43 - Hypnosis

Paddy came back the next day, and he and Harry played chess. While they did so, he explained a little about the hypnosis to his patient. "Hypnosis can not compel you to do anything that you wouldn't normally do. If, while under hypnosis, you are asked to kill someone, your inherent aversion to the act would prevent you from performing it. What hypnosis *can* do, is relax you enough to take a look at events in your life from a safe position."

"You mean like it happened to someone else?"

"Not generally, usually you just feel safe enough to study the situation optimistically. When you can look at events and not feel threatened, there are lessons that can be learned that might otherwise be passed over in fear.

"That's not to say that you don't feel strong emotion, while under hypnosis, but it is easier to convince the subconscious mind to take a look, so to speak."

"How long will it take?"

He smiled. "That, Harry, is totally up to you. When you make up your mind that you are going to remember your earlier life, that is when it will all come back. You should know as well, that it won't necessarily happen while under hypnosis. The treatments open the door, your mind has to decide when it will walk through it.

"Now, because you are a wizard, and your mind is more powerful than the people you call Muggles, it may take you a while to relax enough to allow examination. You more so than most, I would suspect. Albus tells me that you are very powerful."

"Is there really that much of a difference between muggles and wizards?"

"Naa...not really. The biggest difference is that even the most intelligent Muggles use only about 10 of their brainpower; wizards on the other hand access more of that power from a different area of the

brain. Your wands focus the power and the spoken spell directs that power in a particular way. So, there you are, voile, a wizard!"

Harry took a deep breath. "Well, Paddy, when can we get started? I'm anxious to get to the bottom of all this."

"Very well, Harry, if you think that you are ready, we can start tomorrow. Is that all right with you?"

"Well, I was hoping to start right now. That way I won't have time to get nervous about someone delving into my mind."

"But Harry, I won't be delving into your mind, you will. I am just your guide."

"Still..."

"All right, Harry, if you want to start now, we will." He looked around the room. "Can you light the candles and draw the curtains over the window please?"

As Harry did as he asked, Mikeal ran into the room and hugged Harry around the legs, "Daddy, I got ta pet a llama today!"

"A llama? Where did you see a llama, Miki?"

"At school. Teacher asked a lady to come today."

"Well, that's exciting I must say. Miki, this is Paddy. He is going to help daddy get over the bad dreams."

Miki turned to the man and studied him a minute while he hid half-way behind Harry's leg, "You're gonna help my daddy?"

"If I can, young man."

"Paddy, this is our son, Mikeal."

"He's a handsome boy, Harry."

Harry picked him up and gave him a hug. "Miki, daddy is going to need it to be quiet. Can you go tell mum that I need her and then tell

Uncle George and Uncle Ron that you are going to keep an eye on them?”

Miki kissed him on the cheek. “OK , daddy.” Harry put him down and watched him run from the room.

“He’s a wonderful boy, Harry; and Ginny is a wonderful woman. You are a very lucky man.”

Harry smiled and took his eyes off the door and looked again at Paddy. “Yes I am, I think; but I want to know it.” Harry sighed. “He took so much away from me, Paddy.”

“You’re talking about Lucius?”

“Him too, but I was actually talking about Draco. I don’t understand how someone could do that. It is just beyond me.”

“Harry, would you like to be able to forgive Draco?”

“Forgive? I really don’t know, Paddy. At this point, I don’t think I could even look at him.”

“I tell you what, Harry, if you would like, Draco can be the first item of business.”

Harry shook his head. “No, I want to figure out what my mind is hiding.”

“As you wish.”

Ginny came in. “Ooh, candlelight, how romantic.”

“Cute, imp! We’re going to get started, I thought you would like to be here.”

She pulled a chair up and sat. “Absolutely.”

“All right, Harry, I need you to get as comfortable as possible; uncross your legs and relax your arms on the arm on the chair. Close your eyes, Harry. Now, you need to clear your mind of all worries and problems. Worries do not exist. Problems are a thing of the past.

Listen to the sound of my voice and focus on it. Take a deep breath and release it slowly; and another, slowly, and another. Feel the warmth of the room around you. You are safe. You are with people who love you. You are warm.

“Do you feel the warmth, Harry?”

“Yes.”

“Take another deep breath in through your nose and release it slowly through your mouth.”

I want you to picture yourself sitting on the ground under a tree. The breeze is gently blowing the leaves, making the light dance around your body. There is a stream nearby, passing over the small rocks making a gurgling sound. Birds are singing in the trees; you are surrounded by the beauty of nature. Look at the area in great detail; note where the flowers are, note if there are other trees. Is the water deep or shallow? Take in the detail. This is your safe place, Harry. When ever you are frightened, tense, stressed, or angry, I want you to come to this place. Do you understand me, Harry?”

“Yes.”

“Very good, now, take a deep breath, Harry and release it slowly. Now, I want you to concentrate on the top of your head, physically will your brain to relax. Relax the muscles in your face; let the tightness flow from your face. Your eyelids are heavy. Feel the warmth of the sun on your face. Now move down to your jaw. Let gravity pull the tension away from your jaw. Feel the tensions in your neck flow away with your worries. Take another deep breath and release it slowly. Feel warm fingers massaging your neck and pulling all tensions away from your body. Now release the muscles in your shoulders. Feel the sun warm on your shoulders...”

So he continued, taking Harry’s mind through each part of his body, coaxing him to release the tensions that he carried with him. He verbally allowed Harry to picture each body part and relax it in turn.

Harry could feel the tension draining from him. He felt heavy, as if it would be impossible for him to move if he had too.

“Harry, let that tension drain from your toes. Now take another deep breath and release it. Harry, I want you to listen very carefully to my voice, concentrate on my voice. Use my voice as a lifeline. There is a door in front of you, Harry. You can go through that door or not, it is totally your choice. Do you see the door, Harry?”

“Yes, what’s behind the door?”

“It is the very first thing that you can remember. Are you walking to the door?”

“Yes.”

“Good. Now, I don’t want you to open it, just yet. Look around you, do you see anything?”

“Yes, a door knob.”

“Look at the door, Harry. What color is the door?”

“I thought it was white, but the closer I got, the darker it got.”

“What does the door look like, Harry?”

“The paint is chipping and peeling, the door knob is rusty.”

“Are you standing in front of the door, Harry?”

“Yes.”

“Your earliest memory is behind that door, Harry. You can go in or stay out, it is completely up to you. What would you like to do?”

“I want to go in, but I’m frightened.”

“What are you frightened of?”

“The people there.”

“They can’t hurt you anymore, Harry. You are in control. Take a deep breath and release it, and another, and another. Let the tensions flow away from you. Now, what will you do?”

"I'll open the door."

"Very good, Harry; as you do, feel the warmth around you. Have you opened the door?"

"Yes."

"What do you see?"

Harry frowned as he studied the scene in his mind's eye. "I see me...and Lucius. There are other people, I can hear them, but they are in the shadows. I can't see them. This is a frightening place. I don't like it. Lucius is standing in front of me."

"What is Lucius doing, Harry?"

"Helping me to stand."

"Why do you need help to stand?"

"I am weak. I am so tired, my throat is parched, and dry."

"Is there anything else?"

"I'm naked, and cold, and very confused."

"Who did this to you, Harry?"

"I don't know. I can't see anyone."

"But you can see, Harry. Lucius is there in front of you; there are others standing in the shadows."

"Yes."

"What do you hear?"

Harry was quiet for a moment as if listening. "Whispering."

"Can you hear the words?"

Again he was quiet. "No."

"I have a hard question for you, Harry? Of all the people in the room, who seems to be in charge?"

"Lucius."

"If Lucius is in charge, why would he allow the others to make you so tired, cold, thirsty and confused?"

"H...he...didn't. He is helping me

"Harry, I want you to walk around the room and study the people there. You can see them. The subconscious mind can register things that the conscious mind does not pick up on. Study the face of each person in the room, listen to each word that they say, and tell me what you see and hear."

After a while, Harry spoke again. "That is Ernie MacMillan; he is my friend from school. He is talking to someone that I don't know."

"What is he saying, Harry?"

Harry cocked his head as if listening to something; then his eyebrows furrowed. "Potter is finally getting his. I hope Malfoy kills him before this is all done."

"Didn't you say that Ernie was a friend, Harry? Why would he say that?"

"I...I don't know."

"Do you think that maybe he knows something about Lucius that you don't?"

Harry ignored the question, and in his mind's eyes, he saw some people he knew and some that he didn't. One conversation seemed to irritate him. His breathing became shallow and his muscles were twitching.

Paddy spoke softly. "You are safe, Harry. Nothing can hurt you here. These are only memories long in the past. Take a deep breath

through your nose and release it slowly through your mouth. Again, and again.”

Paddy waited until Harry’s body began to relax again before he continued. “Now Harry, tell me what you just heard.”

Harry’s voice was flat as he spoke. “One of them said: ‘Only Lucius Malfoy, could turn Harry Potter, into a willing Death Eater. Even Voldemort couldn’t do that.’”

“Were you a willing Death Eater, Harry?”

The tears were flowing now. “Yes, I was.”

“Are you a willing Death Eater now, Harry?”

Harry sneered. “No...NO! I will not be a Death Eater. Not now, not ever again.”

“Alright, Harry, take a deep breath and release the tension in your body as you exhale through your mouth. Again. Again”.

Harry followed Paddy’s instructions, and once more began to feel the tension leaving his body.

“Do you feel more relaxed now?”

“Yes.”

“You are doing very well, Harry. Now, there is another door in front of you. It will take you beyond this point; back before you remember Lucius helping you. You can walk through that door or you can return to your safe place. It is totally up to you. You are in control of that door. What will you do? Take a moment to think about it, Harry.” He waited a moment before he spoke again. “Take a deep breath, Harry, and release it slowly. Now, what do you want to do? It is completely your choice. No one will force you to do anything.”

“I want to go through the door.”

“Then reach out and take the door knob in your hand; turn the door knob; push the door open, walk in. Have you walked in Harry?”

“Yes.” Harry’s voice was a whisper and he was physically shaking.

“Harry, focus on my voice; release the tension, breathe deeply and release the breath slowly, and again, and again. Remember Harry, nothing in this room can hurt you. This is only a memory. Can you tell me what you see?”

“Ginny.”

“What is Ginny doing?”

He began to cry. “Putting the Cruciatus Curse on me. I don’t understand. Why would she hurt me?”

“Ginny *wouldn’t* hurt you, Harry. She only looks like Ginny. Take a deep breath and let go of the tension. Do you know that Ginny would never hurt you?”

“No. I hope so, but I don’t know. I don’t want to stay in this room.”

“That’s all right, Harry, you don’t have to stay, but you can’t go forward right now. You can only go backward out the door you came in or stay in this room until another door appears. Remember, these are only memories, they can not hurt you. What do you want to do?”

Harry thought for a long moment. “I want to stay. Can I talk to Ginny?”

“Yes you can, but first you must look at her very carefully. Study each detail; each movement that she makes. Listen to the sound of her voice. Look at her facial expression. You must determine for yourself if this is Ginny, or an imposter.”

“She looks like Ginny, but...”

“But what, Harry?”

“But I’ve never seen that expression on her face before. When she looks at me, there are many things there, but never hate. This is hate. Ginny doesn’t hate me.”

“No, she doesn’t”

“Does that mean that this person isn’t Ginny?” Harry seemed to relax again.

“That’s correct, Harry. This person isn’t Ginny, but if she isn’t Ginny, why does she look so much like her? Can you think of any ways that this person can become Ginny?”

Harry thought for a moment. “Yes, she could be a metamorphmagis and change her looks at will, or she could have taken Polyjuice potion. Wait, I smell cabbages, but why is that important?”

Harry screwed up his face in concentration.

“Have you figured out why that is important, Harry?”

“Polyjuice Potion smells like cooked cabbage.”

“So, Harry, what conclusion do you come to?”

“Of course this isn’t Ginny, it’s polyjuice. Draco could have easily gotten something of Ginny’s to put in the potion. So when I killed, Ginny, I didn’t, I killed an imposter.”

“How do you feel about that, Harry?”

He smiled. “Very relieved.”

“Good, good. Now Harry, I want to talk about something else. You told me that you killed someone at this point. Is that true?”

Harry once again sounded distraught. “Yes.”

“How do you feel about that?”

“Well, I don’t ever like to kill, but sometimes it is necessary.”

"Tell me, Harry, was it necessary this time?"

"Yes, my Master had ordered me to do it, I couldn't disobey him. It was like being under the Imperious Curse, but stronger, I think. The Imperious Curse doesn't work on me."

"That's true, Harry, but at this point you were very weak from abuse. Harry, you said your Master ordered you to kill Ginny, right?"

"Yes."

"Who is your Master; and why would he order you to kill your wife?"

Harry spat the name. "Lucius Malfoy, and to answer your second question, to test my loyalty and his control over me."

"And does Lucius Malfoy have any remaining control over you?"

"He still calls, but I have resisted so far. I am worried that if he calls again, that I will be too weak to resist."

"Do you know that this control that he has over you is completely your choice? You can let it go if you want. Do you want to let go, Harry?"

"More than anything."

"Then, Harry, the next time he calls, I want you to repeat in your mind, 'I am my own master, I am in control, he is nothing.' Can you repeat that for me now?"

Harry began to repeat the words. "I am my own Master."

"Stop there, Harry, do you believe that you are your own Master?"

Harry thought for a moment. "Yes."

"Good, go on."

"I am in control."

"Are you in control, Harry?"

“Not as much as I would like to be, but I am getting stronger.”

“Are you in enough control to fight off the pain when Lucius Malfoy calls you? Can you fight the desire to go to him?”

“Yes, he is nothing.”

“That is exactly right, Harry. He is nothing; he has no control over you. You are your own Master.”

Harry’s voice was strong and held no doubt. “Yes, I am my own Master, I am in control, and he is nothing.”

“Very good, Harry. I’m going to bring you back now. I want you to...”

“No, there is another door that I didn’t see before. I want to go through it.”

“No, Harry. I want you to get used to this new knowledge you have. Any more right now would be too much. Do you trust me?”

“Yes.”

“Good, then I’m going to bring you back. Do you feel your body waking up?”

“Yes, I do.”

“Good, I need you to come back slowly. Go back to the tree with the breeze blowing the leaves. Are you laying under the tree, Harry?”

“Yes.”

“Good, I want you to stay relaxed but become aware of your body. Do you feel yourself coming back?”

“Yes,”

“Good, now when I count to three, you will be totally awake, refreshed and relaxed. One. You will remember everything that we talked about today. You will remember your discoveries about Ginny. Two. You will be at peace with yourself and your wife. Three.”

Harry's eyes opened and he took a deep breath."

Ginny took his hand. "How do you feel, Harry?"

He thought for a minute. "Remarkable!" His eyes were shining when he looked at Paddy. "Thank you."

"Not at all my boy. Now, I am going to leave you two alone. I'll be back tomorrow, Harry. Same time. All right?"

"Brilliant."

Ginny started to stand to walk Paddy out but he waved her away. "Don't worry about it, my girl. I know the way. You stay with Harry."

She smiled at the older man. "Thank you, Paddy."

"Not at all, my girl."

After he left the room, Harry looked at her and smiled. "I have never been through anything like that in my life. That was – remarkable. I could see everything just as it was but from an outside perspective. Like being inside a pensive but totally relaxed." He laughed and pulled her to sit on his lap, and whispered in awed amazement. "It wasn't you Gin, It really wasn't you. Thank God, it wasn't you."

"I thought you knew that, Harry."

"I thought I did too, but I guess it was – hope, I suppose? Hope that you really didn't betray me like that. But now I know; it's like a wall has been taken off of my shoulders." Then he kissed her and he held nothing back. All the passion he was feeling went into that kiss. "Thank you, Ginny."

Chapter 44 – Finding Harry

Lucius Malfoy raged at the remaining Death Eaters who lay prostrate on the ground in front of him, “I want Harry Potter back! I want my son back!”

“I am sorry, milord. They both disappeared shortly before the attack began. They said that they were going to head off any escapes and headed up the ridge. No one has seen either of them since. We believe that they were captured.”

Lucius’ eyes narrowed, “Well, of course they were captured, but by whom? Dumbledore most likely, that meddling oaf. *Crucio!* If I want supposition, I’ll ask for it. What I want is answers.

A Death Eater rushed into the room and stopped at the scene; afraid to come farther into the room and interrupt, lest he be on the receiving end of the next Cruciatus Curse.

When Lucius lifted his wand, he waved everyone out. He looked at the late comer and called him over. “Tell me, Lind. What was so important that you interrupted me?”

“I beg your pardon, Milord, but we found Harry Potter.

Lucius began to pace, “And, where is he?”

“He’s at the Manor house, Milord.”

Lucius turned and stared disbelieving at the death eater. “His Manor?”

“Yes, Milord.”

“And how, may I ask, did my faithful Death Eaters miss that piece of information until now?”

“Apparently, he only recently arrived, Milord. They had him hidden away until now. I hesitate to give you more bad news, Milord, but I must. It appears that Potter is beginning to get his memories back. He is no longer yours, Milord.”

Lucius was quiet for a long time. "Ahh, I see." Lucius paced in thought then turned back to Lind. "Then we will simply have to kill him."

"Yes, Milord."

"Any word of my son, Lind?"

"Nothing, Milord. We have searched Azkaban, the Ministry and every other place where he would likely be held. He has simply vanished, Milord." The Death Eater was quiet for a while, then spoke again. "Milord, is it possible that Potter was not as broken as we thought him? Could he have resisted the brain washing process, only to try to catch us off guard? He could have captured your son. There was no love lost between the two of them."

"You are indeed thinking, Lind, however it is impossible. Harry Potter was too weak to fight the Legilimency I used against him. No, he is mine, or was at the time he left here."

Lind bowed. "Yes, Milord."

Lucius held out a hand. "Lind, your arm please."

The man held out his left arm and Lucius touched the tip of his wand to the black tattoo there. Suddenly, it grew hot and red and Lind let out a yelp of pain.

Lucius held it there, lengthening the call. One by one, Death Eaters began to appear and form their circle around their master. Then something happened that hadn't ever happened before; Lind's mark, instead of glowing red slowly turned from red, to purple to a brilliant blue. It then began to glow and the force of the resulting shock knocked Lucius off of his feet and onto his back.

Lind stood there in shock and horror as he looked at his master, then to his left arm.

"Master, I have no idea what happened. I..."

But he didn't get the chance to finish his statement. Lucius pointed his wand at the stunned man and growled out "Avada Kadavra."

Lind crumpled to the ground and never moved again.

Chapter 45 – Break Through

The library was dark, except for a single candle that glowed from the table that sat between the two men. Harry sat relaxed, eyes closed and listened to the warm voice in front of him.

“You are lying beneath your tree, Harry. You are watching the gentle sway of the leaves and the sunshine dancing across everything below them. The day is warm and lazy. Now, Harry, we are going to be delving deeper into your memories today. So I am going to do something just a bit different. If you feel threatened, or pain or extreme anxiety, I am going to touch your arm, like this.” Paddy reached over and took Harry’s wrist in a firm grasp. “That is your signal to relax; to know that all is well. Do you understand me?”

“Yes.”

Are you relaxed? Do you feel your muscles relaxing, Harry?”

Harry smiled. “Yes

“Good. Now look around for the door. Do you see it?”

“Yes.”

“It’s time for you to go through that door now, Harry. Tell me when you do.”

Harry reached out for the door knob and pushed to door open. He looked around and realized that he was in a cave, magically manacled to a large rock inside a cage. He was completely naked. It was cold and his teeth chattered. He could hear screaming. He recognized the voice right away. “Miki”. He became irritated and began struggling against the invisible bonds that held him.

In reality, Paddy and Ginny watched him struggle against imaginary restraints as tears rolled down his cheeks. “Miki.”

“Harry, remember that these are only memories. This is not real. Take a deep breath, in through your nose and out through your mouth.”

But, Harry, was too far into the memory, to hear the instructions from outside his mind. He struggled harder, and his muscles shook with rage, frustration, and cold. As he relived the agony he felt at not being able to help his little boy, his breathing became rapid almost to the point of hyperventilation.

Ginny looked at Paddy in a panic. "Can't we do something for him? Please, Paddy. He is suffering. He's been through enough of that."

The older man looked at Ginny, and held up a finger indicating that he had heard her, but he was going to do things his way. He reached out, and took Harry's wrist.

"Remember the signal, Harry. You are safe here. Calm down. Go back to your tree if you have to."

But Harry struggled on, against the invisible restraints. "Miki!" This time, it was screamed. The utter anguish was apparent in his screams. Then he sobbed. "Miki."

Paddy, was beginning to be alarmed. Harry's ordered and powerful mind, wasn't responding to the preset signals that they had set. Paddy struggled to keep his own voice calm and break through to his patient. "Harry! Listen to me. The things you are seeing are in the past. They are over. You don't have to do this. Miki is safe. Harry, can you hear me?" By this time, Paddy had knelt in front of him and had hold of both of his wrists. "Harry, I'm going to bring you out of this." Paddy's voice was strong and firm. "Harry, I want you to..."

The door to the library opened and Mikeal walked in. "Mum?"

"Come over here, Miki. Can you talk to daddy?"

He nodded his head and proceeded to crawl up into Harry's lap. He put his hands on the side of his head and whispered. "Daddy, I am fine. I dinnent get hurt. Do you hear me, daddy? I dinnent get hurt."

Immediately, Harry's breathing calmed, and his heart rate began to slow to a normal rhythm. Moments later, his eyes fluttered open and looked into the concerned eyes of his son. Without a word, Harry

pulled his little boy closer and sent a prayer heavenward to what ever deity was responsible for Mikeal being there, safe and sound.

Paddy looked concerned. "That was the darnedest thing I have ever seen. Harry, can you tell me what happened?"

Miki turned around and leaned against Harry's chest.

Harry took a deep breath and closed his eyes again. "It wasn't like before, Paddy. I was there. I wasn't watching from the sidelines like I was with Ginny, I was seeing through my own eyes, just as it happened."

"But you do remember it?"

He nodded and wiped a stray tear from his eye. "Yes, but that isn't an experience that I want to repeat. Will the sessions get worse from here on, or is it just this particular experience that is so poignant?"

"I'm really not sure, Harry. I have dealt with wizards for more than twenty years, and I have never had a problem pulling them back from a memory. Albus told me, that your mind was exceptionally ordered and that you were very powerful, I suppose that I underestimated just how much power was involved here. Let me ask you ,Harry, how do you feel now that it is over?"

Harry took a deep breath before he answered. "Very glad that it is over."

He smiled kindly. "That's good, but what I meant was; do you realize now, that what you heard and saw was a performance for your benefit."

Harry thought for a moment. "Yes, I suppose that I do." Then he smiled. "You know, Paddy, we have touched on the two things that were of most importance to me; Ginny and Miki. I know now that neither of them was hurt, nor were they responsible for my ordeal. Is there any reason to continue the sessions?"

"Let me ask you, Harry, do you remember your life before being abducted?"

Harry looked forlorn. "No, I don't."

Paddy patted his arm. "Don't fret my boy. These sessions are not mandatory. You may just need a rest. You have been attacked, by your own mind. These sessions are forcing you to remember things that you want to leave buried. It's a self protection that your conscious mind has devised. Why don't we give you a rest for a while?"

"I can help, daddy." Miki turned again in his fathers lap. "I can help. Wolf told me how."

Miki had the attention of all three adults now. Harry pulled the boy closer again. "Tell me how you can help, mate."

"Well, wolf said that the things you are seeing are hard for you 'cause you are feelin' like you are alone. Then he told me that I can come wiff you and make it easier for you 'cause you love me."

Harry shook his head. "Miki, I don't want you to see and hear the things in my memories. I don't know everything that I am going to see, but..."

"But, daddy, I want to. I don't want you to hurt, and I can help."

Harry looked helplessly up at Ginny. "He's too young, Gin."

Ginny had tears in her eyes. "Harry, I have a feeling that Miki hasn't been young since the day he was born." She looked lovingly at her young son. "Miki, did wolf tell you how to do this?"

"Yes, mum, but I have to have Mr. Branigan's help."

Paddy looked at the boy. "What sort of help do you need from me, my young friend?"

"Wolf says that you need to just do what you do and he will do the rest."

Paddy looked from Ginny to Harry. "I have to say that I have my misgivings about all of this. I don't understand this power your son has, therefore, I am a little nervous in tampering with it. However, I

am willing to admit that when dealing with wizards, I still have a lot to learn. If you two are comfortable with this, then I will give it a try. Do you want to try it now or wait for a while?"

Ginny looked at her two men. "It's you two that are involved, so you two need to make the decision."

Harry looked at Miki. "What do you think, Mate? Do you want to do this now?"

"Yes, daddy, I want to help you. Wolf says, we will be safe."

Harry nodded and gave his son a hug. "I think, Paddy, that we will try it now." Miki nodded and hugged Harry.

Paddy looked at the two in the chair. "All right then. Harry, get comfortable. You know the drill. Mikeal, can you tell me what you are going to do so that I am prepared?"

"I'm going to do just what daddy does. Wolf will show me after that."

Once again, Paddy took Harry through the relaxation exercises that were necessary to clear his mind. This time Miki went through the exercises as well. Miki got excited and giggled. "Daddy, that's *our* tree."

"Yes, it is. This is where I feel happy."

"Harry, do you see a door?"

"Yes."

"Miki, do you see it as well?"

"Yes, come on daddy. Let's go through it."

Paddy waited a few moments for Harry and Mikeal to perform the necessary actions in Harry's mind.

"Harry and Miki, have you gone through the door?"

Both Harry and Miki answered this time. "Yes."

Miki added, "There's a big wall blocking our way."

"Can the two of you go around the wall?"

Miki answered. "No, we keep walkin' but it keeps growin'."

Harry's voice sounded amazed. "Miki, is this wolf?"

"Yes, daddy."

"Harry, are you able to see Miki's guide?"

"Yes, I am." Then he chuckled. "Wolf has a Hawaiian accent."

"Harry, can you tell me where the wall is coming from?"

There was a pause and Harry frowned. "Wolf tells me, that I am putting it up, because I don't want to see what is on this side of the door."

"Very well, Harry. It sounds like this is one of your biggest fears. Do you want to go through the wall, or would you like to address another problem right now?"

Harry was quiet for a while, then he answered, almost reluctantly. "I think...I think that I should go through the wall."

"Can you push through?"

Ginny and Paddy watched Harry's hand come up and stop. "It seems pretty solid."

"Daddy, you don't haf' to go 'frough the wall if you don't wan' to. You can do that latter."

Paddy looked at Ginny and whispered, "I couldn't have said it better myself."

Harry took a deep breath and frowned. "No, let's just get this over with. I'm just not sure how to do it."

"Can you simply slip through the wall? Or perhaps tear it down?"

"I can try. Hey mate, where did wolf go?"

"He said that he wanted you to trust me, not him. He said he will help if he is needed. Daddy, you have to think about what started all of this. Think about what made you hurt."

There was a long pause before Harry let out an angry growl. "Draco! Well, well, well if it isn't my, mate, Draco. Betray any good friends lately? 'Avada Kadavra!' Ginny had barely pulled Paddy out of the way in time. The spell hit the bookshelves behind the hypnotist and collapsed into a pile of dust.

Miki's voice sounded alarmed. "Daddy, why did you hurt, Uncle Draco?"

"Because he started all of this."

"Then why is there another wall?"

"I don't know, buddy. Shall we go through it and find out?" They were both quiet for a while.

Ginny's voice was concerned. "Miki, what is happening?"

"There's people mum. Lot's of people. I know some of them."

Harry started wading through a sea of people. Draco, Lucius, Voldemort, dementors, death eaters, Ron, Hermione, Dumbledore, Ernie McMillian, Severus, Aunt Petunia, Uncle Vernon, Dudley, Rita Skeeter, people he went to Hogwarts with, people he went to primary school with. There were hundreds of them.

All of the people started crowding him, jostling him, grabbing and pawing at him. He was beginning to panic."

Once again, Miki put his hands on Harry's temples and touched his forehead with his own. "Daddy, it's OK. These people can't hurt you. Wolf says that you don't need to be afraid, daddy."

For a few minutes more, Ginny and Paddy watched Harry struggle with memories that were very difficult for him to deal with."

“Granpa Albus and Uncle Ron are here, mum. Why would they be in daddy’s bad memories?”

“We’ll talk about it later, baby.”

“Mr. Branigan, daddy is through all the people. But he is fightin’ with Uncle Draco again. Uncle Draco is hurtin’ him. Mum, get daddy out of here now. He won’t listen to me. Mum, please now.”

Paddy sprang into action. “Harry, come back now. Go to your tree, Harry. Do you hear me? Go to your safe place. There is no one there to hurt you.”

They watched Harry struggle to pull back. As he calmed a bit, Ginny asked, “Miki, did daddy go back to the tree?”

“Yes, mum. He is fine now.”

Outwardly, Harry was gasping for breath and shaking. Inwardly, he sat under his and Miki’s tree and buried his face in his hands.

Miki patted Harry on the back. “It’s OK, daddy. Uncle Draco is gone. Let’s go see mum now.”

Paddy looked physically shaken. “OK, Harry. I need you to come back to the library. Do you hear me, Harry?”

Harry’s voice was nothing more than a whisper. “Yes.”

“Three, you are safe and in the company of those who love you. No one can hurt you. Take a deep breath, Harry. Now release it slowly. That’s good. Two, you will remember all that has transpired here today and use it to your advantage. Take a deep breath, in through your nose and out through your mouth. One, you are awake. Take a deep breath, Harry. Concentrate on nothing but breathing. In and out, again...and, again. Now, open your eyes, slowly.”

Harry did so, looking considerably more pale than when he started.

Oh his lap, Miki opened his eyes as well and immediately relaxed his head on Harry’s shoulder.”

Harry began to breathe a bit easier and turned to Ginny. "Sweetheart, please take Miki to bed, he's exhausted." Then he whispered to Miki. "Thank you, mate."

The two men sat for a while in silence. Harry was lost in thought about what he had just experienced, while Paddy dealt with the amount of power that was in Harry's possession.

Harry finally looked up at the hypnotist. "Paddy, can you tell me why I put all of those people behind a wall?"

"Well, Harry, I think that is a question that you need to answer yourself. Let's examine the people that were there. The first person I want to talk about is. Draco."

Harry grit his teeth. "All right."

"Who attacked first?"

"He did."

"And, you defended yourself?"

"At first, after that, I killed him because of what he did."

"I see. Now after you went through the wall I take it that you encountered a group of people, am I correct?"

"Yes."

"Who was there?"

Harry shook his head and closed his eyes again. Practically everyone I hate. My aunt, uncle, cousin, kids from school, Hermione, Ron, Albus, Draco, Lucius, Severus Snape...."

"Stop right there for a moment. Go back. You said that Draco was there too?"

"Yes, why?"

“Because, you just killed him moments before, on the other side of the wall; why do you suppose that he was there again?”

Harry chuckled. “Because my mind works in weird and wonderful ways, Paddy. I keep looking for ways to torment myself, and Draco seems to be the way my mind has chosen.”

“You may be more right than you know, my boy. Now, I want to change the direction of our talk a little bit. Let’s talk about some very specific people that you saw. You said Ron and Hermione, correct?”

“Yes, but Ron wasn’t as threatening as the others were; neither was Albus. They just more or less looked at me sadly and asked me to forgive them.”

“Why did they want you to forgive them?”

“Well, Ron did because of the Hermione thing. Albus because he didn’t tell me everything that I needed to know.”

“And did you forgive them?”

“Yes, and immediately after, they disappeared.”

“Do you remember anything else?”

“Yes, and this may sound a bit silly.”

“I have news for you Harry. We are dealing with the sub-conscious here. It always sounds silly, as you put it. But it is through that silliness that you can get your answers. So, go on.”

“All right, well, Hermione had a huge paper heart that she kept ripping in half, over and over. Every time she did, it hurt me a little more. Rita was writing on a piece of paper and the more she wrote, the more it hurt. The Dementor kept trying to make me cold and kiss me, the Death Eater kept trying to curse me, the kids from both of my schools kept teasing me – wait a minute! These are all people who have tried to hurt me in some way over the years.” Harry stopped in surprise then looked up at Paddy. “And the wall. Wolf said that I put up the wall because I didn’t want to see what was on the other side. But it

wasn't so much that I didn't want to see as it was that I didn't want to deal with it."

"Harry, I would like to ask you a very important question. Do you remember the actions of these people?"

Harry thought for only a moment, then laughed in amazement. "YES! I Remember!" He jumped up and a huge smile spread quickly on his face. "I remember my aunt and uncle and my piggy little cousin. I remember the kids at school." Then he gasped. "I remember Hermione! Merlin! I remember all of them!"

Then he dropped down into the chair again, his moment of elation gone as quickly as it came. "Why? Why would all those people want to hurt me? What on Earth did I ever do to them?"

"We all have things that we can't understand, Harry. Why someone did something often times can only be answered by the person himself. The point is that you remember each one of them, and that, son, is more progress than I ever would have expected for the short amount of time that we have been working at this. This is only the second session for heaven's sake. Remarkable. Remarkable."

Both men looked up when Ginny opened the door.

"Is Miki all right love?"

She looked at Harry strangely and a slow smile spread across her face. She wiped a tear and ran across the room and threw herself in Harry's lap and covered his face with kisses."

Laughing he held her at arm's length. "Ginny! Wait a minute. What is going on? Is Miki all right?"

"Yes, Harry he is perfect, and so are you! Or at least you will be."

Harry shook his head. "I don't understand."

"You haven't called me 'Love' since you have been back, Harry; and you did, just now. You called me 'Love'."

He hugged her close. "Well, if I had known that it was going to get this kind of reaction, I'd have done it long ago."

Ginny turned to their guest. "Paddy, does this mean that Harry's memories are starting to come back?"

"Well, yes as a matter of fact it does. So, even though this session was a difficult one for Harry, it was also very productive." He stood and rubbed his hands together. "Now, I think I will help myself to a wee dram of the good master's brandy, then I will see myself out." He bowed slightly toward Harry who smiled at him and winked.

Harry stood, poured Paddy a generous portion in a crystal goblet, then went to a cupboard and pulled out a fresh bottle. "A gift for you, Paddy."

He smiled as he looked at the label. "1981? Hum, a very good year. Thank you, Harry. Thank you very much."

"And we thank you, Paddy. Will you be coming back tomorrow?"

Paddy shook his head. "No. I want to give you a couple of days to recuperate after today's secession. You may have had a break through, but I want to make sure that you are ready for more before we continue. I also want to see how big the hole is that we made today. You should start having little memories trickle through from now on. It will be interesting to see just how much you remember in a couple of days." Paddy drained the cup. "In the meantime, I am going to lie on the beach, and soak up some rays."

Ginny and Harry walked Paddy to the door and saw him out. "I'll be back in two days. In the meantime Harry, write down everything you remember."

"I'll do that. Good bye, Paddy."

Ginny gently closed the door then turned to stare at her husband.

He smiled at her. "What?"

"Oh, nothing, really. It's just that we may actually get through all this."

“Well, I certainly hope so. I want to know why you have a vase full of rose stems in our room.”

Ginny only laughed.

Chapter 46 – Dragons and Rascals

Over the next two days, Harry spent a good amount of time trying to force memories to come to the forefront of his mind. He soon found, however, that they would not be forced. It was at night, when memories would trickle through the fog and into his conscious thought.

The first night, it was terrible. He dreamed of dragons swooping down on him, Ginny and Miki. He dreamed faces that he didn't recognize, fading in and out of his vision. He dreamed Draco was manipulating and misleading him down paths that were dark and frightening. That night he sat bolt upright in bed a number of times, sometimes with a scream, sometimes with eyes wide and terrified.

Ginny spent the night sitting against the headboard, talking to him quietly and calming him when he panicked. She sat behind him and massaged his shoulders, and wiped his forehead with a damp cloth until the tension disappeared.

Harry leaned back against her, closed his eyes and breathed in her fragrance. "Gin, why are you doing this?"

Ginny drew her brows together and leaned around to look at him. "What do you mean, Harry. Why am I doing what?"

Harry sat up and turned around so that he was looking at his wife. "Ginny, all the sleepless nights, the death threats, the hatred, the calls from Lucius, all of it! Why do you put up with it all, why do you put up with me?"

She smiled and cupped his cheek. "Harry, because I love you. I have loved you since I was ten years old, and I will love you long after we are both gone. I married you for better or worse. This just happens to be the 'worse' part. I'm expecting great fun during the 'better' part." She had an impish smile and her eyes twinkled as she looked at her husband.

Harry smiled and moved a bit closer. "You know..." He reached for the buttons on the pajama tops that she had stolen from him. "Sleeping...at times like this...is way...over-rated."

Ginny sighed contentedly as she leaned forward and put her head on Harry's chest and smiled as he caressed her back.

"Harry?"

"Ummm?"

She pulled back and looked at him. "I do love you. I...just thought you should know that. I will never leave you, and I will never be one of those people behind the wall."

Harry looked at her and his eyes brightened with unshed tears. He pulled her close again and just held her. "I know!"

&

"Draco, be reasonable! You can't turn yourself over to the Ministry. They are out for blood. What you need to do, what we need to do, is get out of the country. Hiding at Hogwarts, no matter how well the Professor has you hidden, is not going to work for much longer, and it is only going to put Albus in a difficult situation. Let's go back to the States. It's a big place. You never have to run into Harry or Ginny...ever! Please Dray. Think of us; think of our son. He will never know his father if you do this." Moira knelt down in front of her husband, took his hands and rubbed her cheek against them. The tears were flowing freely as she looked into his eyes. "Please, Draco, please."

Draco was quiet for a long time. His voice was barely a whisper. "Moira, what kind of a husband and father would I be? After what I did to Harry, how can I live with myself? I can't...no; I won't go back to my father. Not that he would have me anyway. He is not a stupid man. By now, he knows that I have betrayed him. He knows that I handed Harry back to Dumbledore. Or if he doesn't know, he suspects." He looked at his wife with desperation in his eyes. "Moira, I am so screwed up.

She smiled through her tears. Yes, you are, Draco, but that's what is so endearing about you. At least you know it."

Draco chuckled. "Oh, thank you very much, Moira, love of my life." The sarcasm dripped from his voice. Then he was serious again. "Moira, it's not so much Harry and Ginny that I am worried about, really. Harry is entrenched in Hawaii. They may never get him out of there. What I am concerned about, is the US Special Forces. They are as bad as our Aurors. You know, it's a 'when you least expect them, expect them' type thing. I don't really want to spend the rest of my life, running from the Authorities in *any* country."

Moira started to protest, but Draco held up a hand to stem the argument. "...But, for your sake, and that of our son...I'll not do anything right now. Is that satisfactory?"

She wiped her eyes. "Well, I would prefer a declaration that you were going to stay hidden until we've cleared your name; that you were going to fight them tooth and nail; that you were going to do whatever it takes, to make it up to Harry. But, doing it for the baby and me is a start. Let's just stay here and let Albus work his magic. I have more trust in him than anyone else right now. We'll work on this and get it fixed. You'll see."

Draco's smile was sad, as if he didn't believe a word of it, but for Moira's sake he would go along.

&

"Harry, until you deal with your feelings about Draco, you will not get past this point." Paddy was holding the notebook that Harry had kept for the last few days. The things that he remembered and his dreams seemed to have a similar theme. Draco.

In the next few sessions with Paddy, Harry could not progress as some version of Draco stood guarding the 'door' that Harry needed to go through.

The first was a Hungarian Horntail with Draco's face. The second was a giant Draco, armed to the teeth and towering over a very small Harry. The third was both Draco and Lucius, guarding a large metallic door that had a key that the pair waved enticingly in front of him. All three attempts to 'break through' left Harry, sweating, hyperventilating and angry.

He angrily pushed himself out of the chair he was sitting in and paced the room. "Damn it! Even in my mind, he attacks me!" He grabbed onto the arms of Paddy's chair and growled into his face. "How do I get rid of him, Paddy? How do I get him out of my mind?"

Paddy answered him flatly. "You have to confront him."

Harry pushed himself away and began pacing again. "I don't even want to be on the same planet as he is, let alone the same room. I can't, Paddy. I can not confront him. I don't want to look at him, I don't want to see him, I don't want to know him."

"Harry, evidently you care about this more than you are willing to admit, right now. Did you let yourself love him?"

Harry spun on Patrick Branigan. "What did you ask me?"

Paddy smiled. "Not like that, Harry. Let me rephrase the question. Did you think of Draco Malfoy as...a brother?"

Harry looked at him in defiance, then bowed his head in agony. Tears came to his eyes and he couldn't answer the question in any more than a whisper. "Yes."

Paddy got up, and walked toward Harry, and put a comforting hand on his shoulder. "Then, my young friend, you need to confront your dragon. You need to talk to Draco."

"But..."

Paddy held up a hand to stop the protest that he was sure was coming. "Harry, no one ever said that these sessions were going to be easy. You are essentially fighting for 'you'. Draco is your next step. Until you get that taken care of, I can't take you any farther."

Harry sighed and walked over to look out the window in the library. Ginny, who had been quiet to that point, came behind him and ran her hand down his back. He put an arm around her and rested his forehead against hers. "I can't do it, Gin. I can't even conceive of being in the same room with him, let alone talk to him."

"I know love. I don't blame you."

Harry smiled and huffed at her. "What? No words of wisdom, no trying to convince me to talk to the twit? You are slipping, Ginny."

She laughed. "Harry, this is one of those things that I know that you will deal with. Maybe not now, but you will in your own time. I have no right to push you into something that you aren't ready for."

"You, Genevra Potter, are a woman wise beyond your years." Then he sighed and turned to the room's other occupant. "Paddy, where does this leave us? Can we do anything more or does it stop here for a while?"

"Considering that you are blocking, I think, Harry, that for now, this is where we stop." Paddy stood and smiled at the two of them. "You know how to contact me, in the event that you change your mind, Harry, or if you just need to talk." Then he gave the two of them a warm smile. "This has been most enlightening and most enjoyable. I will be returning to England. When you are ready to proceed, let me know."

Harry looked at the older man sheepishly. "You must think that I'm horrible."

Paddy looked genuinely shocked. "Heavens, no, Harry. Heavens, no. These things can't be rushed. You and only you will know when you are ready to face that particular problem." He took Harry's hand and shook it. "Just continue to keep the notebook for me, so that when I return we have a starting point." Paddy turned to leave but suddenly turned back. "Oh, I almost forgot. I've got a little gift for Miki. I hope you don't mind. If you would come out to my car."

Paddy reached into a large box in the back of his car and pulled out a little ball of black fur and handed it to Ginny.

"Oooohhh." She rubbed her face into the fur, and the little ball turned, and started licking her face.

“He was abandoned down on the beach. I thought that Miki could use some little boy entertainment. He spends so much time in his ‘vocation’ I thought he needed something to help him be a kid.”

Harry beamed at him. “Absolutely, Paddy. Thank you, very much. I am positive that he will love him.” Harry laughed at Ginny then looked back to Paddy. “I think he might help all of us. I’ll be in contact, Paddy. Thank you for your help.”

They watched as Paddy’s car drove down the drive and stopped as the school bus pulled to the end of the driveway.

Ginny put the puppy down. “He is so adorable.” Then her eyes twinkled as she looked at Harry. “And the puppy isn’t bad either!”

Harry looked at her and started laughing. “So you go for the older men. That’s OK, Ginny. I can step aside quietly.” Then he stopped and looked at her hard. “Wait a minute! What am I saying? Maybe I should go after him and eliminate my competition.”

She smiled and put her head on his chest. “No, Harry, I don’t think that will be necessary. You’re stuck with me for a good long time.”

They stood there and watched Miki exit the bus and run over to the waiting car. He ran up to the window and said his hello’s to Paddy, then continued up the drive to his parents. “Mum, Daddy, Mr. Paddy says you have a present for me.”

Ginny sat down on the step and handed the wiggly fur ball to her son. “Paddy, brought you a puppy, Miki.”

Miki’s eyes went wide as he saw the pup and picked him up and hugged him. “Oh, mum, he’s perfect. I want to name him Rascal. Is that OK?”

“Of course, Mik. I think that is a perfect name.”

Chapter 47 – Self Recriminations

“Harry Potter will pay for deceiving me!” Lucius Malfoy raged. “I want to know WHERE my son is. Did Potter kill him? Has he been captured? MacMillan, I want answers and I want them now!”

Ernie MacMillan crept forward on his knees. “I...I am sorry...milord...we haven’t been...able...to locate your...son. H...he is not...at the Potter M...manor.

Lucius Malfoy narrowed his eyes. “MacMillan...” Lucius bent down and snarled in his ear. “...Get up!”

He waited for the trembling man to stand hastily. “MacMillan, I don’t want to know where Draco isn’t. I am quite aware of where he isn’t! I want to know where he IS! FOOL! Find him. He is at Hogwarts. I know it. That old fool Dumbledore has him locked up and hidden away there. That would be just like him. Go there! Search him out! Do it now before I loose my patience.”

Ernie MacMillan bowed deeply to his master. “Yes, Milord. It will be as you wish.” Ernie bowed out and quickly slithered through the door, happy that he had managed to avoid the Cruciatus Curse...for once.

Ernie chuckled to himself and shook his head. He had never known anyone like Potter. That man could defy God himself and get away with it. He turned a corner in the hidden complex and entered a room with two large fireplaces; one at either end of the room. He grabbed a fistful of floo powder and stood on the cold hearth. “The Three Broomsticks!” He threw the powder down and vanished, in a flash of green flame.

He stepped out into the tavern a bit disoriented because of the excessive spinning that was the result of traveling by floo powder. He carefully brushed the soot from his clothes and looked around the bar. As expected, it hadn’t changed at all. Rosemerta still waited tables and flirted shamelessly with the clientele.

Ernie realized that he had arrived in the middle of a Hogsmead weekend. “All the better” he thought. Less people to deal with at the school.

Ernie went to the bar and ordered a drink and sat in the back watching the traffic coming and going from the busy tavern. He realized quickly, that listening to the ramblings of students wasn't going to give him the information he needed.

He downed the drink and made his way out into the cold early spring air. He trudged his way up to the gates of the school and boldly entered. He was met at the doors of the castle by Professor's Dumbledore and McGonagall. He looked at the two imposing figures and smiled slightly. "Professors, I've come to ask for asylum."

Both professors eyed him skeptically, then Albus smiled and his eyes twinkled. He turned to Professor McGonagall. "Minerva, take Mr. MacMillan to my office if you please. I have an appointment that, unfortunately, will take me away for just a bit."

McGonagall nodded to the older man. "Mr. MacMillan, please come with me." She walked with him but said nothing until they reached the gargoyle guarding the entrance to the hidden office. "Coconut Bonbons." The statue jumped to the side and revealed the circular steps. Without a word, Professor McGonagall, stepped onto the rotating steps, and didn't look back at her companion.

"Professor..."

"Not just yet, Mr. MacMillan. The walls have ears." At the top of the steps, the professor pulled her wand out of her sleeve and performed an intricate series of movements and the door made an audible click. "After you Mr. MacMillan."

Minerva sat behind the large desk that graced the room, she looked at the young man before her and smiled. "Sit down, Mr. MacMillan. Now suppose you explain exactly why you need asylum.

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"Mr. Malfoy, there is something of which you need to be made aware. Hogwarts is currently hosting one Ernest MacMillan, who has come seeking asylum."

“MacMillan? Here? Albus, I suspect that my father has sent him here to find me.”

“Why would he send him here of all places? Why not the Ministry cells or Azkaban.”

Draco thought for a moment before answering, then smirked. “Two reasons Albus. First, he would have already checked those places; and second, he would do anything to vex you. He knows very well that you will have to devote your time to protecting me. He would do anything to give you trouble.”

Dumbledore chuckled. “It is very gratifying to know that I can have such an effect on someone as...prominent as your father, without even trying.”

Draco smiled. “Anyway, when MacMillan left Hogwarts, he went into healing. He studied wizard psychology. I’m not certain what changed him. I have, in fact, wondered at that. He approached known Death Eaters and asked to talk to my father. My father was happy to have him join. He brought with him, considerable experience in working with a person’s mind.

“Albus, if MacMillan is here, I would bet that he is not, in fact, looking for asylum; rather he looking for me.”

“That was my thought as well, Mr. Malfoy. The question is, are they looking for you as a captured friend or a turncoat.”

“That is hard to say.”

Do you know if he is an accomplished Occlumense?”

Draco shook his head. “That isn’t something that is bantered about among Death Eaters. That way no one knows whom they can trust. The only one who would know the answer to that question would be my father. However, I would suspect that he is. With his background in psychology it would only be natural to be able to use both Occlumency and Legilimency. I do know that MacMillan quite enjoyed the time that Potter spent with my father. Lucius put him in charge of the psychological torture that Harry went through.” Draco gave an

involuntary shudder at the thought. He then looked back up at the Professor. "Albus, I wouldn't trust him."

The Headmaster considered the information carefully, then nodded. "Very well, Mr. Malfoy. I will take your advice under consideration. Thank you. I trust all is well with you?"

"As well as can be expected, I suppose. I would really like to...I don't know...do...*something* to make all this up to Harry. Professor, do you think that I will ever get that opportunity?"

Dumbledore put a comforting hand on Draco's shoulder. "My boy, you have already made giant strides in that direction. Trust me, I know Harry. He will eventually come around. It might take something drastic to do it this time, but he will come around."

Draco only nodded. "You're probably right." He sighed. "I sicken myself, Albus. I'm not even strong enough to stand up to my father when I know that I am doing something that will get my best friend hurt. It would have been better for Harry if he had died you know."

Albus Dumbledore looked at the young man who now sat with his head in his hands. "Mr. Malfoy, our Mr. Potter would disagree with you. I believe that he is very happy that he is still alive and kicking."

Draco bolted up, grabbed a vase and sent it flying across the room. When it shattered against the wall, Draco just hung his head and his shoulders began to shake as he sobbed. "I'm a real piece of work, Albus." He began to pace as the tears subsided. "I need to fix this for him, Albus. I need to give him the opportunity to get his revenge. I need to turn myself over to the Ministry."

Albus Dumbledore was quiet for a long while, then he approached and put a comforting hand on Draco's shoulder. "My boy, what would turning yourself over to the ministry do for Harry?"

"At least he would know that the cause of all of his pain is gone."

"Believe it or not, Draco, you can be of better service to Harry, if you are free to move around."

The blonde spun and glared at his host. "And am I free to move around, Headmaster? Am I not at this very moment, hiding like a frightened rabbit, afraid to come out of my hole? Look at me Albus. Have you ever in your life seen anyone so *pathetic*?"

Albus Dumbledore sighed. "Mr. Malfoy, I must attend to Mr. MacMillan. However I will return as soon as that problem is taken care of. Until then the best thing that you can do is try to think of a way that we can make Mr. MacMillan's visit a profitable one."

He nodded and watched the old man walk to the door of his hiding place, then stopped him. "Oh, and Albus."

Dumbledore turned around and smiled. "Yes?"

"Please, call me Draco. I am definitely not Mr. Malfoy."

"As you wish, Draco."

Chapter 48 – Let Him Find Me

Harry, Ginny, Miki and Rascal went back into the cool interior of the castle. Harry swung Miki onto his shoulders, then looked at Ginny. "Maybe you should take Miki and go get the things that Rascal will need. Let's see, I think he'll need a bird cage..."

Miki started giggling.

"What's so funny? Oh yeah, he'll need a hamster wheel."

Miki was laughing outright now. "Daddy! Rascal isn't a hamster or a bird."

"Really? Hmm, well maybe we'll leave the shopping list to mum." Harry swung him down again. "Ginny, why don't you take Miki shopping; I'll find the perfect place for the pup."

Miki pouted. "Can't I stay here and play with Rascal?"

Harry smiled. "What do you think mum? Can he stay here and play with Rascal?"

Ginny cupped Mikeal's face. "Of course darling." She grabbed her keys off the wall by the door. "I'll be back in a bit. And Miki, if Rascal has an accident, be sure to tell daddy." Her eyes twinkled at Harry.

Harry rolled his eyes. "Gee, thanks!"

By the time Ginny returned, she found Miki and Rascal curled up on his bed sound asleep. She put a bed down in the corner and took the puppy off Mikeal's bed and put him in the basket. Then she quietly closed the door and went in search of Harry.

She found him sitting on the edge of their bed staring at the vase of rose stems. She stood in the doorway and leaned against the jamb. "Anything?"

He sighed. "No. Why not just tell me."

She shook her head. "Uhuuh. That's..."

He held up a hand. "I know, I know. That's something I have to remember on my own. Come here, you."

Ginny walked over and hugged him. "What?"

He pulled her between his legs, put his arms around her waist and hugged her resting his head on her breast.

She ran his fingers through his hair and waited for him to speak. "Will this ever be over, Ginny? You can't imagine how frustrating this is; knowing that there is a whole lifetime that I can't remember. What's even worse, is knowing that the only way that I will be able to get those memories back is to deal with someone that I had hoped never to see again."

"I know, Harry, but you'll get through this. You always do."

He looked at her. "Now see. That's just it. I don't know that. That bastard took more from me than my dignity. He took my life and for good or bad, I want it back."

Ginny kissed him soundly then took his face in her hands. "Then Harry, give yourself a couple of weeks to deal with the sessions you've already had; and by the way, no one said that you had to forgive Draco, and no one said that you had to deal with him in person. You need to find a way to get him out of your mind. That's all. When you aren't spending so much time being angry with him and what he did, then you can put him out of your mind and move on. Right now, understandably I might add, you are obsessing about him. Once that is taken care of, let the memories come, but don't try to force them. Then you can have Paddy come back. It is up to you love, but if you want to get to the bottom of all this, face up to it no matter how hard it is for you."

Harry lifted one corner of his mouth. "In other words, quit whining, suck it up and deal with it; is that about it?"

She grinned. "Yes, you've got it. I knew you were smart enough to figure it out."

"Hurumph."

“What was that, Harry?”

He changed his voice to sound nasally. “Yes dear!”

She giggled and pushed him down on the bed and kissed him.

Suddenly Harry broke the kiss. “We have company.”

Ginny turned her head to the door and saw Miki standing there with his puppy in hand. “Mum, you said to tell daddy if Rascal had an accident.”

Harry groaned and Ginny hit him. “Alright dear. Daddy will take care of it. In the meantime...” She kissed Harry on the cheek and stood up. “...I’m going to cook dinner.”

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“I am deeply sorry, Mr. MacMillan, but there really isn’t a safe place in Hogwarts. I can provide you with a letter of introduction to some friends of mine. I am certain that they will provide a safe haven for you. I assure you, they have no love for Lucius Malfoy.”

But Ernie MacMillan did not get to be in Lucius Malfoy’s upper echelons by being easily put off. “Professor, please. I don’t trust anyone but you. I’m willing to work while I’m here. Maybe I could teach. I am pretty good at Defense Against the Dark Arts.”

“Mr. MacMillan, we could not have you in such a visible position. It would not only put you in danger but the students and teachers as well. I am certain...”

At that moment someone knocked on the door and both of the men turned toward it. Albus Dumbledore went to the door and opened it slightly. “Ahh, Minerva. How may I help you?”

Words were exchanged at the door, that try as he might, Ernie couldn’t hear. Albus quickly stepped back into the room and looked at his guest. “Mr. MacMillan, you will be provided with a room tonight, and tomorrow we will find you more...suitable accommodations. Minerva, will you please see to it that Mr. MacMillan has all that he

needs to be comfortable?" He turned to Ernie. "Mr. MacMillan, it seems that there is a matter that needs my immediate attention. Please allow Professor McGonagall to see to your needs. I will return as soon as is possible."

Ernie nodded. "Thank you, Professor Dumbledore."

After he watched MacMillan leave, Albus went to his office and grabbed some floo powder and thought 'Draco Malfoy's rooms'; he threw the powder in and disappeared.

Draco paced in front of the fireplace in deep thought when the professor stepped from the hearth. "Mr. Mal...excuse me, Draco, Minerva tells me that you have a solution to the Ernie MacMillan problem."

Draco smiled. "I do Albus. I say, let him find me."

Chapter 49 – Trying to Fight the Dragon

“You know that I just got back here, Harry.”

“Yes, Paddy.”

“And now you want me to come back?”

“Yes, Paddy.”

“And you think that you have had a breakthrough?”

“No, Paddy.”

“What do you mean, no Harry? You just said...”

“I said that I think that I know how I can get past this particular hurdle.”

“And that is...?”

“Polyjuice Potion.”

“Polywhat Potion?”

“Polyjuice Potion. I thought you knew everything about wizards, Paddy.”

“Hardly everything, Harry, and of course I know what Polyjuice Potion is.”

“Good, then you know that it can make a person look like another person.”

“Yes, but how is that relevant to your situation.”

“I can get someone to take the potion to look like Malfoy. Then I can have my say and get it done and over with. What do you think?”

“I think, Harry, that it is a bad idea. First of all, whom would you get to drink that stuff and face going up against you? You are the most powerful wizard on Earth today. Second, if you know it is not Draco, it

will not be as effective. And third, whom would you get to drink that stuff and face going up against you? You are the most powerful wizard on Earth today.”

“You said that Paddy.”

“Yes I know, but it bears repeating. In fact, whom would you get to drink...”

“Paddy, I get your point.” Harry’s voice sounded a little disheartened.

“Keep your head up, Harry. It normally wouldn’t be a bad idea. But I wouldn’t want you to kill your victim in a fit of temper. We’ll think of something else, all right?”

“Sure, I guess.”

“I’ll talk to you soon, Harry.”

“Yeah. Bye, Paddy.”

Harry hung up the phone and sat in an overstuffed wing back chair. “Damn!” He looked up at the ghost who had floated in, in the middle of the conversation. “Tavish, is it too much for me to expect that just once, something would come easily?”

The ghost chuckled. “Aye laddie. Bu’ if i’ come too easy, whare wou’ th’ fun be?”

Harry eyed him skeptically. “I think that you are trying to placate me Tavish.”

The ghost floated back and put a hand on his chest and looked affronted. “I? I’ll have ye know...”

Harry waved his hand in the air. “Na na na na na, don’t give me that.” Harry stood up and walked across the room to the bar. He poured himself a generous portion of bourbon and held it up in the air in a toast. “To me, Tavish.”

The ghost snapped to attention and pulled out his ever-present flask and held it up as well.

Harry continued. "The biggest fool that ever walked this Earth."

Tavish lowered the flask and looked at him in sorrow. "I'll no' drink to a lie, Harry."

Harry wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and looked skeptically up at the floating apparition. "But it's not a lie, my friend. Who else would have been taken in by that...prat!"

"Aye, I ken understan' yer feelin's, Harry. But from what I've haired, ye've spen' a fair amoun' o' time wi' th' dragon. How cou' ye no' be fooled. 'e were a wolf in sheep's clothin', 'e were. Th' firs' thin' ye nee' ta do is fergive yerself fer bein' fooled. Any mon wha' think's badly o' himself is no goot to anyone.

"Forgive myself?"

"Aye laddie. 'At be a goo' place ta star'

Harry paced the room for a while. "Forgive myself. "

"Then after ye do 'at, ye look at wha' happen' ta ye. There be na shame in givin' trust. None o' wha' happen' ta ye wair yer faul'. Ye wair taken agin' yer will an' cruelly misused. Thar ag'in no' o' yer doin'. E'en th' stronges' mon in th' worl' 'as 'is breakin' poin'. I did wit' me own bonnie wee lad. Ye di' wit' yer lassie castin' 'at curse at ye."

Harry smiled at the ghost. "You've been listening in on my sessions, I see."

"Aye laddie. Yer frien' Paddy be a goo' mon. 'E's go' the righ' o' i'.

The two turned when the library door creaked open and Miki peeked around it. "Daddy?"

Harry's brows knitted together. "Hey, mate. It is way too late for you to be up. Are you having trouble sleeping?"

The little boy nodded his head and rubbed his eyes. "I had a bad dream, daddy."

Harry picked his son up and sat down with him. "Tell me about it, Mik."

Miki put his head on Harry's shoulder. "I don' remember it now, Daddy, but it was sumpin about Mrs. Lee."

A pang went through Harry and he wished that he could remember his time spent with the director of the Residence Home. He sighed and caressed Miki's head. "Did Wolf say anything?"

Miki yawned and shook his head and closed his eyes as he settled into Harry's arms.

Harry looked at Tavish. "You know, this is what it is all about. My right to live my life the way I see fit, to be a husband and a daddy, not the bloody savior of the world. Why can't they just leave me alone? I don't think that that is asking too much.

The ghost nodded his head and smiled. "Now 'at be a toas' 'at I ken drink to."

Chapter 50 – The Prisoner

“Draco, I’m certain that we can find another way to defeat your father. Putting you back into danger is not a good idea. I feel that Lucius would kill you, son or not.”

“Well Albus, then I am one up on you for a change. I *know* he would kill me if he knew. I’ll just have to make sure that my performance is flawless. I’ve been doing it for years. I’m pretty good at it.” This last he said with self-recrimination.

“Have you discussed this with Moira?”

At this, he frowned. “No. She isn’t going to be happy. But it still needs to be done.”

“You do understand, Draco, that doing this does not guarantee that Harry is going to come around. That will happen in his own time, if it happens at all.”

“I understand that, Albus. Merlin, if the situations were reversed, I would be trying to kill him. I have to do this for my own self worth. Whether Harry forgives me or not is completely up to him. I will continue to do what I need to do.”

“Very well, Draco. I will see to it that Mr. MacMillan finds you. I do wish that you would reconsider though. This is a dangerous game you are playing.”

“Ahh, but there you are wrong, Albus. This is not a game.” Albus Dumbledore nodded his head and turned toward the door, but Draco called him back.

“Albus, I don’t want Moira here when this all happens. Can you make sure that...”

“Mr. Malfoy, Moira will be taken care of. I assume that you are going to tell her of all of this?”

“Right now.”

“Very well.”

“And Albus, this room needs to look more like a prison, don’t you think?”

The Headmaster nodded his head. “I will take care of that after you have spoken to your wife. “

Draco went in search of Moira, and found her in the extensive library that Dumbledore had provided for them.

“Hello love.” She beamed up at him from her book and he leaned down and kissed her lips. “We need to talk.”

A half hour later, Moira Malfoy stood crying in her husbands arms.”

“But Draco, this is so dangerous. How can you be sure that you will come back to me...to us?” She gently rubbed her palms over her slightly rounded tummy.

“Moira, there are no guarantees, you know that as well as I do. I will not insult your intelligence by telling you that this will be a walk in the park. But I will remind you that I am a trained Auror, a Slytherin and a Malfoy. If anyone can pull this off, it is me.” He paused and massaged her shoulders and caressed her cheeks with his thumbs.

“My actions have left a big hole in my life, as well as Harry’s. Moira, don’t you understand that I have to do this; not only for Harry, but for me as well? I can barely live with myself. I am a half a man. If I am going to be a good husband and a good father, this is just something that I have to make right. Do you understand?”

She was crying again. “I understand, Draco. I understand that you are putting your feelings above our baby’s needs. He needs to have a father Draco. He needs you.”

“Moira, this will be over long before he is born. I will be there to be a father to him. I promise you.”

“Don’t promise something that you have no power to control. You don’t know what is going to happen. You are needlessly putting

yourself in danger with no way of knowing if you will ever come back. I hate you for that Draco. I hate that you are doing this to our baby; I hate that you are doing this to me, and I hate you.”

“Moirira, please...”

“No! Go. Go if you want too. I just don’t care. You haven’t changed since the day I married you. You are still the same selfish prat that you always were.” She turned her back on him.

She didn’t see Draco’s shoulders hang in defeat. She didn’t see the tears in his eyes that her words had caused, but she heard the door close gently behind her.

Draco leaned his forehead against the door of the library and closed his eyes in grief. “I really do love you, Moira.” The words were whispered against the dark wood, and absorbed, never to be heard by the occupant on the other side.

He pushed himself away from the door, straightened his shoulders and headed back to his rooms to meet a dismayed Albus Dumbledore. “Is all well, Draco?”

“About as well as can be expected. Let’s do this.”

Albus Dumbledore was no fool. He took all contingencies into consideration before acting. And it seemed that he had planned well in the half hour that Draco had gone to talk to his wife. The room had been transformed into a prison cell. The comfortable furniture that had graced the room just minutes earlier, were now replaced with a stone bench and a pallet of straw. A bucket of water sat in the corner. The fireplace was stone cold and bars were placed over the room’s two windows.

Albus turned to Draco. “Well, what do you think?”

“Very convincing, Headmaster. Now I suppose that I should look the part as well. Before he stepped into the room, he used his wand to alter his clothing to look as if he had been a prisoner for sometime. Artistic rips here and there, dirty hair, barefoot with a seeping wound sported on his left arm. He winced when he did that.

He looked at Albus Dumbledore. "Well?"

"Very convincing, young man. It makes me ashamed of myself." He said with a twinkle in his eye.

Draco thought for a moment. "I think one last enhancement is in order. Do you have a mirror?"

Albus conjured a mirror and handed it to the blonde.

Draco took his wand and carefully gave himself a black eye. He studied it in the mirror before looking up at the Headmaster. "Good enough?"

"I would say my boy that you look as if I have sorely misused you. I supposed we will get this little charade of yours underway."

"Albus wait one more minute. Moira is...very upset with me for doing this. Can you please watch over her? I may be gone a while."

"Don't worry another minute, Draco. I will talk to your lovely wife. She is just upset now."

"I will leave her in your hands then. Thank you."

Draco stepped into the room and Albus conjured bars to go across the door. "I'll make sure that he finds you soon. Good luck, Draco."

Draco only nodded to the venerable Headmaster.

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Ernie MacMillan quietly, wandered the abandoned corridors of Hogwarts. It was late; very late. All of the students and teachers had long since sought out their beds and the solace of a night's sleep. Sounds echoed through the passages and Ernie quieted his footsteps, just in case he was attracting unwanted attention.

At the end of the corridor Ernie saw a figure step out of a hidden door, look around as if expecting someone to see him, turn and cast a

locking spell on the door and quickly disappear down a connecting corridor.

Ernie waited for a moment to give that person time to get far enough away before approaching the door himself. He pulled out his wand and whispered 'Alohamora'. When he tried the door nothing happened. Confused, he waved his wand again, 'Alohamora'.

Again nothing happened. Ernie thought for a moment, then shook his head. If the Headmaster was hiding something, he wouldn't put on a locking spell that any first year could crack. He sifted through his memories for a spell that would be appropriate then smiled. "Ouvrirportus"

There was an audible click, a turn of a knob and a space that appeared between the door and door jamb. "Well Ernie, you've still got it."

He cast a silencing spell on the hinges so that it swung open quietly. Then slowly, he set his foot on each step, checking for spells as he descended. At the bottom of a long stairwell was another corridor lit by torches. Cautiously he looked down the corridor to see a guard. He pointed his wand at the sleeping figure. "Stupefy."

MacMillan watched as the guard toppled to one side and fell off of his chair. He stepped over the prostrate wizard to the door. "Ouvrirportus." He swung the door wide only to be met by prison bars.

Across the room sitting on a bed of straw was the most pitiful picture of Draco Malfoy, Ernie had ever seen. He shook his head and knew that there would be hell to pay when he got Draco back to his father. Lucius Malfoy would not tolerate the mistreatment of his son. He knew then that Potter's days were numbered.

"Draco." The whisper was loud enough to reach the unresponsive figure on the pallet, but not alert anyone to his presence. "Draco Malfoy! Do you hear me?"

Slowly Draco's head raised to look glassy-eyed at his rescuer. "Draco, can you hear me?"

“No, Dumbledore. Not again.”

“Draco, it’s me, Ernie.”

Draco’s head shot up and he winced in pain. “MacMillan, is that really you?”

Ernie watched as Malfoy winced and wiped at the crack in his lip.

“Hang on, I’m going to get you out of here.”

“Out? That old coot has everything warded from here to the front gate.”

“Then we’ll just have to leave by secret passage.” He tried several spells on the barred door. Nothing seemed to work. “Malfoy, do you know what the password is?”

Draco shook his head. “Oh, he is very careful, that one. He always took great pains not to let me hear the pass word.”

“How often do they check on you?”

By now Draco had dragged himself to the door and had hold of the bars. “Well, there is a guard here constantly, but I see you have made short work of him. Good job, Ernie.” He added a cough for effect. “He also has someone come and check on me about every hour or so, but one of them just left, so we have a bit of time. That fool of a Headmaster always sets his passwords to be some sort of candy concoction.

Ernie pointed his wand at the lock. “Coconut bonbons.” Nothing happened.

Draco looked at him in question. That’s the password to his office. That would have been too easy.”

Ernie tried every wizarding candy he could think of. Then he started in on the muggle varieties. Draco made several suggestions, none of which worked. Draco sat on the floor and Ernie leaned against the wall. “Think Draco, what would he use?”

“Who the hell knows? He’s a cagey old bastard.”

“Let’s just blast the wall away, like Potter did when he rescued you last time.”

“One, we are at Hogwarts, not Potters dump, and two, we would attract too much attention with the noise. Other than that, it’s a great plan.”

“All right, all right, there is no need to get snarky.”

“No need to...MacMillan, just get me out of here, Now! Hey, I have an idea. Enervate the guard, give him veritserum and get the password from him.”

“Fresh out of veritserum, Draco.”

“Well, we can still force him to tell what he knows.”

“Right.” Ernie picked up the fallen guard and began to speak.

Ernie reached down and picked up the fallen guards’ wand and handed it through the bars to Draco. He trained his own wand on the guard. “Now, perhaps you help me out here. ‘Enervate’.”

The guard looked fearfully down the point of Ernie’s wand.

“Now that I have your attention, why don’t you and I have a little conversation? Open the cell!”

The wizards eyes were wide as they followed the length of the wand, up the arm and finally into the face of Ernie MacMillan.

Ernie tilted his head and smiled at him. “Well? Mr. Malfoy is quite put out with you friend. I would suggest that you co-operate. But it is up to you of course.”

Draco rolled his eyes and mumbled under his breath. “Your interrogation skills are unsurpassed, MacMillan.” Then louder. “If you don’t tell him, he may just kill you!”

“A...And if I do, D...Dumbledore will kill me!”

“Your choice of course, but...” He wiggled the wand in front of him. “...this is a certainty, Dumbledore’s wrath is questionable.”

The wizard looked again at the wand tip, then nodded hesitantly. “It’s ‘Fuzzy Pink Bunny Slippers.’”

Both Draco and Ernie chuckled. The wizard on the floor glared at Draco who sobered suddenly.

Ernie pointed his wand at the cell door. “Fuzzy Pink Bunny Slippers.”

A bright light shot from the end of Ernie’s wand, formed itself into a key and fit it in a lock. Within moments, the cell door was swinging open.

Draco pushed it open and pointed the wand at the guard. “In the cell, now.”

“Let’s just kill him!” Ernie said, smirking at the guard.

“No! I have a message for him to deliver to Dumbledore.” He turned to the frightened guard. “You tell Dumbledore that I will see him again, and when I do, I will thank him properly for his hospitality.”

“Come on Draco, we have to get out of here.”

The two of them made their way back down the corridor, up the stairs and into another long hallway. Draco began to go one way, but Ernie stopped him. “No, this way. It’s the secret passage I was telling you about. I found it when we were going to school.” Draco nodded and turned to follow Ernie out of the school.

The guard watched the two of them go, then closed his eyes as the spell he had woven around himself faded. Where once the small, frightened young man had stood, now stood Albus Dumbledore, the twinkle in his eyes conspicuously missing. “The gods speed, Draco.”

Chapter 51 - Possession

Harry hid in a little used closet off of the main living area. He could hear movement outside the door, so he held his breath. Suddenly, he heard a little yip right outside the door. There was whispering, but he couldn't hear what was being said. Suddenly the door was yanked open and Harry came out with a growl and scooped up Miki. "How dare you invade the MONSTERS LAIR! Now you must suffer the consequences." Harry laid him on the floor and started to tickle him.

Miki was rolling on the floor laughing; Rascal was running around the two of them barking, and Harry was growling when Ginny walked in. She giggled and shook her head.

Harry, looked up at her and stood. He narrowed his eyes and growled at her. It was when he started stalking her that she laughed. "Don't you dare, Harry Potter!" She pointed vaguely over in Miki's direction. "You just stay over there."

Harry bared his teeth at her and gave a low growl and moved closer. It was when he started moving closer, that she decided that to run would be safer, not to mention more fun.

Harry looked at Miki. "I'll be right back, son." He started chasing Ginny around the house. He chased her around the large formal dining table, and through the living area. Ginny ran to the door under the staircase and back out into the kitchens. Harry was right behind her in hot pursuit.

She ran back through the living area, and up the steps toward the library, laughing all the time, and threatening Harry within an inch of his life.

Miki chased Harry, and Rascal chased Miki. Before long, the whole thing turned into a game of hide and seek.

Harry cornered her at the end of a long corridor where there were no doors to bolt through. Harry stopped and let an evil grin spread slowly across his face. Ginny had her back up against the wall and was desperately looking for an escape. Just before Harry caught her, she apparated away. Miki looked at Harry. "Mum cheats."

“Tell me about it.” Then he looked down at his son. “Well, at least I still have one victim. Miki’s eyes got big and he started laughing as he ran away. He easily caught up with him and scooped him up. “Caught ya, ya little house elf.” He put him on his shoulders and galloped down the hall and around the corner to Miki’s room. With an exaggerated gasp, Harry took Miki off his shoulders and dropped him on the bed, allowing him to bounce. “You wore your pony out, oh young prince.”

All too soon, Harry looked up at the mantle clock. “You know, mate, it’s really past time for you to be in bed. You have school tomorrow. Have you taken Rascal out?”

“Yes, daddy, but I want to play some more.”

“So do I, and we will, just not tonight. It’s time for bed.” Harry nuzzled his neck and growled making him giggle.

Then Miki took Harry’s face in his hands and touched his forehead with his. His whisper was barely audible, but Harry heard it loud and clear. “I love you, daddy.”

“I love you too, son.” He gave him a squeeze. He covered him with a light sheet, then sat down on the edge and brushed his hair out of his eyes. “Good night, son.”

Miki yawned. “Night, daddy.”

Harry picked rascal up and put him in his basket. “Stay, Rascal.”

The pup just tilted his head and looked at Harry.

Harry started toward the door and the puppy was right at his feet. “No, Rascal, stay!”

The dog lay down on Harry’s feet. He chuckled, shook his head and picked him up and put him in his bed again. This time he cast a spell so that the pup could only go so far. With a smile Harry walked out the door again.

Then the game was on. Harry looked all over the castle for Ginny and found only traces that she had been there. A rose lying on the floor with an arrow at the bottom of the stem was lying on the floor. Harry picked up the rose and followed the direction the arrow had pointed.

He went a little farther and found an empty champagne flute with a note that said, 'Bet you can't find me.' He chuckled. "Bet I can, Gin."

He heard a very slight noise and walked down the corridor toward it. He found another flute, and a note saying, 'If you want to find me you have to climb.'

He headed toward the door that led to the roof of their little castle. Outside the door, sat a basket. Harry carefully laid the glasses and the rose in the basket and went up the steps. At the top, he carefully opened the door and looked around and frowned. "Ginny? You up here?"

Harry walked around the entire roof. There was no sign of her. The corner of his lips lifted into a one sided smile. "Oh, it's like that is it? Well, two can play that game." He grabbed the basket and went down the steps and went to their bedroom. He stopped as he always did and looked at the vase of rose stems, then shook his head in frustration. He changed into a pair of silk pajamas, grabbed the basket again and then went in pursuit of his wife.

He thought about where she might be, and smiled. He went back to the roof, knowing that she would think herself quite clever, and quietly opened the door again. As he stepped out he saw her immediately with her back to him. She was dressed in a long white flowing gown that left one shoulder bare, and was clasped on the other with the simplest gold frog.

She rested her arms on the wall and looked out toward the ocean. The slight breeze pushed her hair around. Harry just stood there and leaned against the door jamb, folded his arms and watched her.

The thought that kept going through his mind was, "I am definitely a lucky man." Then it hit him. "I owe her. I owe it to her to get my memories back. She has lost just as much as I have." He looked back up at his wife, and laid the basket down and approached quietly.

He came up behind her and rubbed his hands down her arms, and chuckled when she jumped. She spun around with a smile on her face, ready to say something, but Harry hushed her with a finger to her lips.

He caressed her lips with his thumb. Ginny closed her eyes and leaned into his hand. His name escaped her lips just before he leaned down and placed a soft, sensuous kiss on them. He realized, with a shock, that he was happy. Despite all that had happened in the past, he was happy.

He walked back to the basket and picked it up and returned to Ginny. He wagged the empty flutes at her. "I assume that you have something to go in these?"

Ginny waved a hand and indicated a blanket that she has spread out with two pillows at one end a bucket of ice with champagne chilling and a plate of fruit, cheese and bread. "I thought we could look at the stars tonight. There is supposed to be a meteor shower and..."

"I'm looking at the brightest star in my life, right now. Ginny..." He paused, at a loss for words. He thought for a minute then looked again at his wife. "...Ginny, I'm...I'm sorry. I'm sorry that I have brought so much on to you. I'm sorry that being married to me has ever caused you a moments worry or pain."

She started to protest, but Harry stopped her. "No, Ginny, don't. Let me finish. I am going to make it up to you. I know that none of this was my fault, but I am going to do everything, did you hear me, everything that I can to fix it. If that means facing Draco, then I will do it. If it means facing Lucius, I will do that as well.

"I love you, Ginny Potter, I love you more than my own life. I wouldn't be able to face life without you. I can't even imagine what would have happened if I had still been married to Hermione. She never gave much to the mar..."

Ginny gently put a hand on his arm. "Harry, do you remember Hermione?"

He stopped and looked out over the scenery, then back at Ginny. I remember snatches here and there. Our wedding day was a disaster.” Harry led her over to the blanket and sat and pulled her against him. “I...think...that we were supposed to be married outside at the Burrow. It was pouring down rain. All the decorations that she had worked so hard on were ruined. That put her in a proper fit.

Harry looked at Ginny. “Is that right?”

Ginny smiled and nodded her head. Harry continued. “We had to magically expand the house to fit all of the guests that had arrived.” Harry laughed. “And we had to do it secretly to keep Hermione’s family unaware. Her parents kept them busy while your dad and I sort of stretched the house.”

Harry laid his head on Ginny’s shoulder. The memories were flooding his consciousness. Rather than fight it, he let them come. He was quiet for a long moment as he relived the thoughts that overtook him. Finally he squeezed Ginny. “Forgive me love, but, poor Hermione! That was a disaster from the beginning, wasn’t it?”

Ginny snuggled in against him. “Yeah, it was a pretty awful day. I hated Hermione at that point and even I felt sorry for her. Well for both of you actually. You know, Harry, it’s funny the way things work out, isn’t it. The day you married Hermione, was the day I died inside. I was devastated. I actually thought of killing myself.”

Harry stiffened. “Genevra! You didn’t!”

“I did. Not for very long, and never seriously, but yes, the thought did cross my mind. I knew that there would never be anyone that I wanted to be with more than you, and rather than live my life alone, I...”

“Merlin, Ginny. I’m glad I didn’t know this.”

“But look at us now. I have never been happier.”

“Even with all the drama and intrigue?”

She smiled. "Even with all of that. She turned in his lap so that she could see him. "I want you to know, Harry, that through all of this trial, I have never once regretted marrying you. I would do it all again a million times over."

Harry chuckled. "Fool!"

Ginny laughed. "Oh, that's nice!"

Harry laughed. "Ahh, but true." He kissed her neck, and nuzzled her.

They were quiet for a long while, each lost in their own thoughts. Then Harry reached over and popped the cork on the champagne, playfully allowing the water from the ice bucket to drip from his fingers and down the neck of her gown.

"Harry! That's cold."

He didn't say anything, just smiled and poured the wine and handed her a glass. He picked up a grape and put it in her mouth.

Ginny returned the favor, but Harry took the offering and grabbed her hand and put her finger in his mouth. "Umm, you make it sweeter than ever." She snuggled back against him again and sighed in contentment.

Harry pointed to the sky. "Ginny, look."

A star streaked across the sky. They watched as it disappeared on the horizon and Harry gently pulled her head around to kiss her. "They say its good luck to kiss and make a wish on a falling star."

"I've heard the wish part. I think you made up the kissing part."

"Hey, it's always good luck to kiss you. Not to mention a whole heck of a lot of fun." Harry adjusted the pillows that Ginny had brought laid back and got comfortable. When he did, he pulled Ginny to rest her head on his shoulder.

In silence, they watched as a myriad of tiny white lights streaked their way across the sky. When it was finished, Ginny was breathless. She

looked up at Harry and was surprised to see that he had his eyes tightly shut and was struggling to keep his breathing slow and even.

“Harry! What’s wrong?”

He didn’t answer, but kept his eyes closed and shook his head. She sat up and pushed his left sleeve up. As she expected, the dark tattoo now glowed.

“Harry, hang on. This will pass.”

Harry only nodded and concentrated on fighting the compulsion to return to Lucius. A tear seeped from his eye and his breathing became shallow.

“You can get through this love. You are stronger than him.”

Suddenly Harry’s eyes roled to the back of his head. He sat bolt upright and turned to look at Ginny. Harry’s eyes were completely black and she gasped. He stood and sneered at the girl sitting on the ground.

He began speaking, but the voice was not Harry’s. “Your precious Harry Potter will not survive. I will wipe your entire, useless family from the face of the Earth. He will be the last to die. He will pay for defying me. All that he loves, and all that he cares about shall be destroyed.”

As he spoke, Ginny stood and took hold of Harry’s arms. “Harry, can you hear me? Fight him.”

Harry/Lucius threw his head back and laughed. The sound was cruel and hard. “Oh, Mrs. Potter, you are in way over your pretty little head. I release him to you, for a time. But I will have him again, and when I do, I will force him to annihilate all that he loves and holds dear. The beauty part about it is, that he will be aware of every detail and will be helpless to stop himself.”

“The Imperious Curse does not work on Harry Potter, Malfoy. You of all people should know that.”

“Who said anything about The Imperious Curse, Mrs. Potter. I leave him too you. Enjoy him while you can.”

Chapter 52 – Is There a Shaman in the House

Lucius Malfoy sat in a large, throne-like chair and held his wand to his own arm, his eyes were closed in concentration. The pain was nothing short of the Cruciatus Curse, but it was worth it. He had connected with Harry Potter.

Draco, paced at the foot of the throne and from time to time looked at his father. A smirk was apparent on his face as he watched, and listened to his father threaten everything that was near and dear to Harry. If Draco had anything to say about it, his father would not be around long enough to pull off the threat against, Harry.

Inwardly, he snickered. The term father was laughable. Lucius Malfoy was so wrapped up in power, that he had ceased to be a father and had transfigured into a creature that Draco neither knew nor cared to know. Power was like a drug to him. He would do anything to get it, and his favorite activity was throwing it around and frightening individuals that dared defy him.

Harry Potter was at the top of that list. Of course, Harry had been at the top of his father's list, ever since second year at Hogwarts, when he tricked the venerable Lucius Malfoy into releasing the Malfoy house elf, Dobby.

Draco smiled outwardly now. Harry had been outsmarting his father since he was twelve years old. How Lucius expected to defeat him, as a full-grown trained Auror, Draco didn't know.

Knowing that this past unpleasantness was mainly his fault...Draco stopped himself, no not mainly, completely his fault, was a thorn in his side that he was determined to make right. This time, Potter needed help.

Draco was so caught up in his thoughts, he didn't realize that his father had broken the communication with Potter and was watching his son. Draco recognized the subtle push on his mind and immediately blocked the invasion, allowing his father to search, what Draco deemed appropriate memories. Faked memories; of his 'incarceration' at the hands of Dumbledore was a favorite. It made his

father think that Draco was obsessed with getting even with the Headmaster of Hogwarts.

This time, Draco allowed his father a glimpse into the 'hatred' that his son had for the Great Harry Potter.

He didn't react outwardly to the intrusion; giving his father the impression that Draco didn't realize that Lucius was making free with his mind.

Lucius smiled. "Why are you smiling, son?"

Draco looked up into the eyes of his father. "I beg your pardon, father, I was just picturing, Potter, just now. I would love to see him broken beyond repair. It's no better than he deserves. I am also looking forward to that old fool getting his. Remember father, you gave him to me."

"Yes, I did, son. Dumbledore will fall and Hogwarts will be mine, but first things first. Let's concentrate on Potter."

A slow smile spread across Draco's face. "Yes, Let's."

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Harry stood gripping the wall behind him, fury flowing through his body like blood.

Ginny watched as his eyes return to normal. She gripped his arms. "Harry, did you mean what you said earlier? That you would face Draco and Lucius if it came to that?"

Harry was gasping and he fell to his knees. It took him a moment to answer her. "Yes. I meant every word of it."

"Then we've got to do something, and we have to do it now. If he has this kind of control over you, there is a possibility that he can do exactly what he threatened."

"That's just it, Ginny. I already know that he can. You are right except for one thing."

“What’s that?”

“There is no ‘we’ in this. I want you to take Miki and go to Hogwarts. You need protection from me as well as Lucius.”

“Absolutely not, Harry. We are a team. I will not abandon you. Not now, not ever.”

Harry looked at the stone floor. “Ginny, don’t you understand? If I did anything to you or to Miki, I might as well just die right now.” He threaded his hands into her hair and caressed her cheeks with his thumbs. “Please, listen to me, my love. I need you away right now. I need to know that you are safe with someone that can help you protect Miki. I know to the very core of my being that you are the strongest witch I know. I need to know that you are protecting Miki. He has some sort of mission in life to fulfill, but he can’t do that if Lucius kills him.

Harry sighed and looked at his wife then took up his Death Eater stance. “Ginevra, Do it. Now!”

She looked at Harry with defiance in her eyes, but it quickly changed to defeat. She looked at the floor for a moment then back up at Harry and nodded. “All right, Harry. I’ll do it, but know this; if you get killed, there will be hell to pay. I will get even with you.”

Harry smirked at her. “One more thing, Ginny.”

“What?”

“Kiss me.”

A slow smile spread across her face and she stepped forward and put her arms around her husband for what could be the last time.

Harry closed his eyes and clung to her for all he was worth. He kissed her slowly and sensuously. Then slowly pushed her away and whispered, “Go now, and remember that I love you.”

She nodded. She refused to cry. She refused to cry in front of him. He had a fight ahead of him and she didn’t want it to make him

weaker. She touched his cheek. "Don't worry about us, Harry. We'll be fine."

"Mum, daddy?" Miki yawned. "Wolf said that you needed me."

Harry smiled. "Come here, mate. Give me a hug and a kiss. You are going on a great adventure. You are going to see Grandpa Albus."

"Yea!"

Harry laughed. "Yea!"

"Can Rascal come too? Grandpa Albus has never seen him."

Harry looked at Ginny. Can you handle traveling with the pup, Gin?"

She smiled. "Yes, we'll be fine."

Miki turned and looked at Harry and furrowed his brows and studied him for a minute. He then smiled. "Daddy, sit down. Wolf says I need to show you something."

Harry sat on the stone floor.

"Daddy, close your eyes and relax like when Mr. Paddy was here."

Harry looked up at Ginny, then did as his son told him. When Harry was in a state of relaxation, Miki looked at Ginny. "He needs to lay down, mum."

The two of them eased Harry back until he was completely reclined. Miki knelt at his head and placed his hands on Harry's temples. He started chanting, then. Ginny didn't recognize the words but knew that it was Hawaiian.

Then Miki did something that Ginny had never before seen him do. He held out his cupped hands and a tiny tongue of flame appeared in them and began to grow. She gasped but stepped back and allowed him to work.

Slowly, he separated his hands over Harry's forehead and allowed the flame to hover there. Then it began to move growing larger as it

traveled his body. When the flame reached Harry's feet, Miki took it up again and dispersed it to the air.

Harry took a deep breath and seemed to relax as soon as the flame was gone.

Miki opened his eyes and looked at Ginny. "Mum, we need to leave daddy alone for a little while. He is going to be talking to my guide."

Ginny nodded and took her son by the hand and led him back into the castle and down to his room. Just before they left the roof, she turned and looked at Harry for only a moment and closed the door quietly. "What just happened, Miki?"

He didn't speak right away. He appeared to be thinking about how to answer. He stopped at the bottom of the steps. "Let's go sit down, mum. I'll tell you as best I can."

Ginny led him to his room and the two sat on his bed. "Ok sweetheart, what was the flame?"

Wolf said that daddy was in trouble from the bad man again. He told me that you and me were going to leave but that daddy would still need help. Since I was going to be gone he needed help from someone else. Because daddy wasn't a saw man, wolf needed to...per...ahh...anyway it means clean his spirit.

"Purify?"

"Yeah, purify. The fire burned up all the bad stuff in daddy's body. Now he will be talking to wolf for a while, but then he will get his own guide."

Ginny only shook her head. She ceased to be surprised by things anymore. "Daddy is going to have his own guide? But wouldn't that make him a shaman as well?"

Miki looked at Ginny. "Yes mum. Daddy is a saw man now. Wolf said it would change him a little, but it would help him fight the bad man."

Miki sat on the floor and called Rascal over to him. "We're going on a trip, Rascal. You're gonna meet Grandpa Albus. You'll like him, a lot, but you have to be extra good."

Ginny pulled a suitcase out of the closet and started packing it with Miki's clothes. When she finished she closed it and sent it down to the car with a wave of her wand. Then she conjured a travel cage for the pup. "Mik, you need to put Rascal in the bed. It will keep him safe on the airplane. OK?"

"K mum." He grabbed the pup and put him in the cage and closed the door. "Rascal's ready, mum."

"Thank you, baby. Sweetheart, I need to ask you a question. When wolf said that it would change daddy, what did he mean?"

Miki shrugged.

Then they both jumped and turned when Harry answered the question for him.

"He meant that I understand Mikeal's powers now and can use them as well."

Ginny gasped. Her eyes got wide and she smiled. "Wow!"

Harry looked at her a bit confused. "Wow?"

"Have you seen yourself?"

Harry shook his head. "No."

Ginny conjured a mirror. "Here, take a look."

Harry looked surprised as he looked at his reflection. The hair at his temples was silver and circled his head like a ring of laurel leaves.

Harry turned his head to both sides and frowned. "Huh, as if I didn't already attract enough attention." He sighed, and looked at Ginny. "I guess it comes with the territory."

“Do you feel alright? Miki said that this was going change you. I assume that it's *more* than making you sexier than you already were.”

Harry chuckled. “Well, it seems that I now have some of the same powers that Miki has, and that they are enhanced by my wizard side.” Harry shook his head in disbelief. “You know, one of these days my life will be normal.”

Ginny smiled and put her arms around him. “But, until then, tell me what you learned.”

“That's easier said than done. There is a reason that Miki can't explain the things he does. Words are inadequate.” He sighed and smiled slightly. “I met my spirit guide. She is an Abraxan, and she has quite a personality.” Harry chuckled. “It seems that she has been waiting a very long time for me to find her. There is also something else very interesting. She says that she was created specifically for me, that I took my own sweet time in finding her and that I was supposed to become aware of my special abilities long ago, but because I was playing around with that Lord Something-or-Other, my mind was distracted. Then she said that she has a mind to just ignore me for making her wait. She also asked me if I never sat quietly, not thinking, just sitting.”

Ginny giggled. “She actually called him ‘Lord Something-or-Other’?”

Harry smiled. “Yeah.”

“Harry, are you certain that this isn't Lucius playing with your mind?”

Harry put his arms around her. “Absolutely certain, love.”

Ginny nodded her head. “Do Miki and I still need to leave?”

Harry sat down next to her. “Yes Gin. I don't know what is going to happen and I have no doubt that you can handle yourself. It's Miki I'm concerned about.”

She nodded and laid her head on his shoulder.

Harry started to laugh. "Besides, I don't know what is going to happen. If Lucius meets Phylestra it could be explosive."

"Phylestra?"

"My spirit guide. I call her Phyl just to make her mad."

Ginny smiled and shook her head. "Harry, are you sure you should antagonize someone who is trying to help you?"

"Probably not, but it sure was fun. She deserved it. The first thing she did was to start yelling at me. When I brought up the point that she didn't contact me either, she huffed and yelled at me for being cheeky. Did you know Gin that Spirit Guides do not contact their human counterpart? It is beneath them. I accused her of sounding like Malfoy and she got very insulted and threatened to leave me for good. It wasn't until I begged her forgiveness and asked her to stay and promised her that I wouldn't tease her anymore that she agreed."

Ginny grinned. "Your life is never boring, Harry." She shook her head, touched his cheek then sighed. "Come on, Miki, we have to finish packing." Ginny went to her room and waved her wand and watched as her clothes began to fly across the room and into a suitcase that came out of the closet.

While Ginny packed, Miki took Harry out into the corridor. "This is so cool, daddy. Are you happy?"

Harry picked him up and hugged him. "I'm very happy, Miki. I have to admit though, I never expected to learn what you do first hand. You're right Mik, it's so cool." Harry put him down. "Now, you'll take care of mum while you're gone won't you?"

Miki nodded his head. "And you'll take care of yourself, won't you daddy."

"Absolutely. Listen Mate, I won't be able to tell Grandpa Albus what has happened. Can you explain it to him and let him know that I will contact him when I can."

"Daddy, you can't do that."

“Why not?”

“The bad man can get to him through you. You can’t let that happen.”

Harry stopped, concentrated for a minute then laughed a bit. “She sure is snarky. It seems that you are right, Mik. All right, change of plans. If I show up at Hogwarts unannounced, tell Grandpa not to let me in at any cost.”

Almost before he finished talking, he stiffened and closed his eyes and was panting suddenly. Miki ran to Ginny. “Mum! We have to leave now. Phyl is helping him but he can’t hold the bad man back!”

Ginny ran out into the hall. Lucius/Harry was leaning against the wall, arms crossed with a smirk on his face, and his eyes were completely black. “Well, what have we here? A little mouse in a trap!”

Ginny grabbed Miki and pulled him back into the room and slammed the door shut and locked it. “Coloportus!” Then she held Miki close and apparated out of the castle.

Not to be outdone by a witch and a Weasley at that, Lucius/Harry followed and apparated to cut her off. “Going somewhere?”

“Harry, can you hear me. Listen to Phyl.”

“Harry, can you hear me. Listen to Phil.” Lucius/Harry mocked. “And just who is Phil, Mrs. Potter?”

Ginny backed up, never taking her eyes off of the man standing in front of her. She cast the spell that bound Lucius/Harry in colored ropes. He only laughed as the ropes dropped to the ground. “I know everything that your dear husband knows. Try again, Mrs. Potter.”

She kept herself between Lucius/Harry and Mikeal. “Harry, fight him. Let us get away. Harry, do you hear me?”

Lucius/Harry pointed a wand at her. “I’ve listened to all I am going to from you, you pathetic little...” Lucius/Harry stopped and wiped his hand across his eyes. “...pathet...” he gasped. Then Harry came

back to himself for a moment, fighting for dominance. “Ginny, go. He’s getting weaker. Go now. Hurry.”

Ginny nodded. “I love you, Harry.” She grabbed Rascal’s cage out of the car and apparated away.

Lucius/Harry screamed in frustration and pain, then fell to his knees in the drive, where he passed out from the internal battle that he waged with his former master.

Chapter 53 – One of These Days His Luck is Going to Run Out

Draco looked at his father in curiosity. Lucius was on his knees, in front of his throne, screaming in frustration. “Potter! I will have you.”

Draco realized that his father was coming back to himself, so he sighed and changed the expression on his face to one of concern. He helped his father stand and then sit on his throne. “Father, are you all right?”

He gasped at the pain that coursed through his body. “I have to find a way to stay. He has such power, Draco. I want that power...I want his power...permanently.”

Draco shook his head. “Father, with what you are going through, is it worth it? I hate to see you suffer.” Draco almost choked on the last sentence. “We can do other things to stop Potter, Father. We can do it together.”

“No son, I want Potter dead, and I want him to die knowing that *he* destroyed everyone that he loved. What sweet revenge that will be.” Lucius sighed deeply. “But right now, I need to rest. Help me up, Draco.”

Draco helped his father stand and steadied him until he got his balance. Then Lucius waved him off. “I am fine. Go to bed, Draco, tomorrow will prove to be a very fruitful day indeed.”

Draco nodded once and bowed slightly, then watched his father walk haltingly toward his suite of rooms.

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As soon as Lucius was out of sight, Draco ran to his room, quickly cast a silencing charm and a locking spell on the door to his rooms. Then he cast an enchantment on the room to leave his magical signature and slipped out through a hidden panel.

As soon as he was outside the hidden Malfoy complex, Draco apparated to the grounds outside of Hogwarts, then quickly made his

way to the old castle via a secret passage that Dumbledore guaranteed him no one knew about.

He went straight to the office of the Headmaster. At the gargoyle guard, Draco whispered the password that Albus had set up specifically for him, and ran up the moving stairs two at a time. At the top of the stairs, he stopped to get his breath, then stepped through the door after knocking.

He looked around the room but didn't see the professor. Draco opened a door directly behind the large desk and started up the steps there that circled the tower. At the top he knocked at the door.

The door was yanked open as the old man was tying the belt on his dressing gown. "Draco, what has happened?"

"Albus we have a major problem. Harry is in grave danger."

Albus stepped back to allow Draco to enter. "How so, son?"

Draco paced in nervous concern. "My father has found a way to possess Harry, through the dark mark. He is trying to take over his body completely. What's worse, he has access to Harry's power while possessing him. As it stands right now, he can only stay for a short period of time, and the pain that it causes him is considerable. Albus, I know my father. He will find a way to perfect this...this...invasion into Harry's mind. When he does, Harry will cease to exist. He has already threatened to make Harry kill all of those he loves. He says that Harry will know all that he will force him to do.

"Albus, I don't know how to stop him. At least not without blowing my cover. Perhaps it's time to do just that. I am worried about the idiot."

Albus Dumbledore held up his hand to stop the distraught wizard. "Draco, calm down. There is a way out of this."

"And just what is that Albus?"

"As soon as I figure it out, I will tell you. In the meantime, do not, under any circumstances, blow your cover. You are an Auror after all, Draco."

"I know, I know. I don't know what I was thinking, but Albus..."

The headmaster put out a comforting hand on Draco's shoulder. Thank you for this information, Draco. You had better return before you are missed. I will get someone to accompany me and we will go to the Potter's castle. Don't worry. Harry will get through this one too."

Draco just shook his head. "One of these days his luck is going to run out!" Then he sighed. "All right, I'll go but you need to keep me informed."

"I'll do that, son. Now go." Draco nodded and left the office and returned to the apparition point.

"Before I do...is Moira...is she alright?"

"She is quite well, and so is the baby. It's a boy, I believe."

Draco sighed. "Tell her...tell her that, I love her." With that, he quickly left the room.

Chapter 54 – The Plan

“Harry? Harry can you hear me?”

“Is he alive?”

“Quite alive, I assure you. Harry, wake up.”

Somewhere through the haze, a jumble of voices penetrated through to Harry’s mind. He could identify the Headmasters voice, but there was another as well. With a groan, he rolled over onto his back and a bright light shone in his eyes and he brought a hand up to protect them.

Then the memories came flooding back, Lucius’ possession of him, him chasing his wife and son, then pain. He sat bolt upright then and opened his eyes. “Ginny?”

“She is quite safe, Harry. Take it easy. Can you stand?”

Harry looked in confusion at the professor. “Albus, when did you get here?” He looked around and discovered that he was sitting in the driveway in front of the manor. He shook his head as the memories came flooding back. “That bloody, sodding, gormless, tosser. That ruddy bastard! That...”

Then he heard a laugh and looked around.

“Hello to you too, Harry! Good to see you.”

“Bill?”

Bill Weasley stepped forward and took Harry’s hand and pulled him up to his feet.

“Thanks, Bill. Professor, are you sure that Ginny and Miki...”

“They are fine, son. They are safely tucked away.”

Harry turned away. “Albus, you shouldn’t be here. If Lucius...”

“Relax, Harry. I have set wards around you. Lucius won’t be able to get to you.” Then he shrugged. “Well, that is the theory anyway.”

“The theory? You warded me, without knowing what the consequences would be? Oh, I’m just thrilled!”

Bill laughed. “Well, Harry, no one has ever done this to another wizard before. It’s *all* experimental.”

“Well, tell me what I am supposed to do then? He’s messing around with my mind again. I swear, if I ever get my hands on him, I’ll...”

“Harry, calm down. You are not in this alone.”

“That may be, Albus, but when he takes my body over, he knows everything that I know and he has access to the power I hold. That puts you and everyone else that I come in contact with, in danger.” Then he stopped and looked oddly at the wizened Headmaster. “Wait a minute, how did you know what was happening?”

Albus looked at Bill, who looked away, then he turned back to Harry. “We have an informant in Lucius’ camp. Mr. Weasley thinks that I should tell you who it is, but...”

Harry shook his head vehemently. “Absolutely not. For Merlin’s sake don’t tell me who it is. If I know, then Lucius will know. You don’t want to put him in danger. Just knowing that there is someone there has already endangered him. How do I block that information?”

“I think now is a perfect time to use your occlumancy.”

Under his breath, Harry whispered, “The sodding, rutting, bastard!” Then Harry turned back to the two wizards. “You two can’t stay here, especially you, Albus. You are in imminent danger. Lucius wants to kill you and it will give him tremendous pleasure to use me to do it.”

“Well, I have a feeling that you are safe, for a while anyway. According to my source, Lucius needs to rest after each attack. Every time he invades your mind, it causes him great pain. Speaking of which, when Lucius attacks, do you experience pain?”

“No more than when he calls me. Of course, that isn’t pleasant, but I can handle it.”

“I see.” Albus paced for a moment in thought then looked around. “Perhaps we should go inside.”

Harry shook his head at himself. “Forgive me, professor, Bill. Of course, come in.”

Harry led them into the library and went to the liquor cabinet. “Would either of you like a drink?”

They both nodded their head and began discussing the situation while Harry poured and delivered the drinks.

Harry listened to them and shook his head. “I shouldn’t be privy to any of this. Even your being here is going to give the game away.”

“We are depending a lot on your occlumancy talents, Harry. You are up to it. You are an Auror after all, are you not?”

Yes, I am, but, as Bill just pointed out, this has never happened to another wizard before. We don’t know how occlumancy is going to work against this. The less I know the better.”

“I hate to admit it, Albus, but he has a point. With Lucius having free access to Harry’s mind ...”

But Albus held up a hand. “We are all concerned with how much access Lucius has to Harry’s mind. What you are not considering is that it is a two way connection. If Lucius can look into Harry’s mind then...”

Bill’s eyes widened. “If Lucius can look into Harry’s mind, then Harry can...” Bill looked at Harry.

Now Harry’s eyes got wide. “Then I can look into his!”

Albus smiled. “Exactly. Now the only thing we have to figure out is how we can best use this to Harry’s advantage.” The professor

scratched his chin in deep thought. Bill leaned back and stared at the ceiling and Harry paced, looking at the floor.

Then Harry looked at the headmaster. "Albus, is there a way that I can be the attacker? If there is one thing that I am tired of, it is that fact that I am allowing him the upper hand in this whole thing. He brought me down to his level in the volcano, now he's attacking again. If I don't give him time to get the upper hand, if I am relentless enough, he won't be able to force me to harm anyone because he will be trying to protect himself."

"The idea has merit, my boy, but you must remember that every time Lucius activates the connection between you, the pain to him is great."

"I understand that, but I have a theory. If I allow him to establish the connection then attack him, it should, in theory, allow me to battle with him at his expense."

Bill looked thoughtful. "That sounds reasonable. I also have another thought. Harry, Ginny tells us that you have a spirit guide. If Lucius is messing with your mind, then it stands to reason that maybe your spirit guide would be able to assist you."

Harry nodded. "She already helped me in the attack that left me laying out there in the drive. I can ask her for guidance in this."

Albus' eyes twinkled. "Well, get to it then, Harry. The sooner we know how we are going to fight Lucius, the sooner you can put this whole episode behind you."

Chapter 55 – Phylestra

Harry nodded, sat down and closed his eyes. Using the techniques that Paddy taught him, he willed himself to relax. His thoughts centered primarily on his spirit guide. In his mind he was in a field and was looking to the sky.

“Phyl, I need to talk to you. Do you hear me?”

Behind you, Harry.

Harry spun around and smiled at the beautiful winged horse. “Phylestra, Thank you for coming.”

I shouldn't you know.

“Are you still pouting? Come on, Phyl, give me a break. I was a bit busy trying to save the world. I had no way of knowing that you were there to help me. Besides, I'm here now. Are we really going to waste time worrying about when I came to you?”

Well, you are here, so I guess I will forgive you.

Harry bowed respectfully. “Thank you, Phylestra. You are too good to me.”

Yes, that is true. However, I sense that you have a matter to discuss. What is it, Harry?

“First of all, Phyl, I want to thank you for your help earlier.”

The abraxan flapped her wings and tossed her head in irritation. *Who was it that dared to attack my mortal? I wish I had had more warning, I would have been able to teach you to push him out sooner.*

“Well, it's funny you should mention that. That is exactly what I've come to talk to you about. The attack will happen again, of that I have no doubt. Do you know of any way to block him?”

To completely block him, would be very difficult. However I have an idea that will teach him never to attempt it again. Unfortunately it would require a great deal of effort on your part, Harry.

Harry sighed. "That Phyl, is the story of my life. What do I need to do?"

The Abraxan wrapped a protective wing around Harry. *We will construct a box. With my instructions and your magic, this box will trap him here.*

"Wait, I don't want him trapped in my mind, Phyl. I just want him to leave me alone!"

Did I not say that it would be difficult, Harry? It is a temporary situation anyway. Now, the box we will build will be as vast as your mind. For a human, that part of you at least is impressive...

"Nice, Phyl. Can you spare me the litany of my faults and tell me what I need to do?"

I need you to cast the spell that you developed. The ropes that you held him bound before should do nicely. But I will teach you how to strengthen them.

"I have never tried casting a spell in my mind before, Phyl. Do I need to do anything different?"

No, Harry, when you are in this sphere of influence you can cast a spell just as if you were in your mundane world.

"I need to tell you that he has been in my mind and has defeated that particular spell before."

Phylestra sighed deeply. *Harry, Harry, Harry. Did I not say that I would teach you to strengthen them?*

Harry rolled his eyes. "Alright, yes you did. I just want to make sure you are working all the knowledge."

I was here, remember.

"I keep forgetting. Be patient with me Phyl. I'm new at the Spirit Guide thing. Maybe when this is done, you can help me get my memories back, Phyl."

One thing at a time, Harry.

Harry did exactly as Phylestra asked him too. He cast the spell and took each piece and set them in the ground one at a time. It was the most physical work that he had done in a very long while and a short way into the job he was sweating profusely."

Phyl stopped him. *Harry, your friends are worried. Your physical body is showing the signs of your hard work and they are not sure what is going on. Talk to them. Reassure them. I like the old man. He is very strong, not as strong as you are, but strong none the less. And the red man is handsome.*

Harry laughed. "So, you fancy, Bill. I'll have to tell him. How do I talk to them?"

Phylestra laughed. *Do you not know how to talk, Harry? For someone so noisy, I would have thought that...*

"Alright, you pest. I get the idea. Merlin's beard you are snarky. Albus can you hear me?"

"Of course, my boy. I am gratified that you are alright. You are alright, are you not?"

"Yes, perfectly fine. Phylestra is helping me. Don't worry. I am going to get back to work for right now. Time is of the essence. Oh, and Bill, Phyl thinks you are handsome. She likes your red hair."

Bill laughed. "Thank her for me, Harry."

"Alright. I am getting back to work right now. I need to finish before Lucius attacks again." With that, Harry turned back to the black winged horse. With a laugh, Harry rubbed a hand down her silky neck. "Bill said thank you, Phyl. Maybe I should arrange for a blind date or something."

Now who's being snarky? Get back to work, Harry.

Harry worked hard to complete the box. Then suddenly, Harry felt the beginnings of a push on his mind. "Phyl, he's coming."

Relax Harry. You are ready for him. When you see him, allow him to come to you. When he gets close, release the binds that you have created. I will take over from there. Watch and learn.

Harry watched Lucius approach from a distance. When he reached him, Lucius smirked. "Well, Potter, are you going to release your mind to me or are you going to fight me again. You will not win."

A smile spread slowly across Harry's face as he released the bonds that he had built. They formed themselves into bars but began to mutate and flatten until the edge of one met the edge of another forming a solid box of light and color. He could hear Lucius yelling to be released, but he only laughed.

Phyl nuzzled him with her nose. *Very well done, Harry. Very well done, in deed. Now I will show him his greatest fears. He will not soon forget this experience.* The Abraxan flew in a tight circle around Lucius' prison and the area around the box turned dark. He couldn't see them, but Harry heard the howls and cries of unseen creatures blending with the screams of terror coming from Lucius.

Phyl put a comforting wing around her protégé. *Come, Harry. We will leave him here for a day, or a century. I can never remember which is which.*

"A day is twenty-four hours. A century is one hundred years."

What's an hour again?

Harry rolled his eyes. He could tell that explaining the concept of time, to a creature that had little use for it, was going to be an on going project.

"Phyl, will I be able to function with him trapped like this?" He looked back at the box then to his mentor.

It will be difficult at first, but in a short time you will be able to function normally. Now this is very important, Harry. Do not release him until I tell you too. Release him too soon and the lesson will be lost.

“As you wish, Phyl.”

Once again he looked back at the box that was almost completely obscured by the dark. He almost felt sorry for Lucius. Almost!

Return to your friends, Harry. Rest. You have put in a good effort.

“I doubt that I will be able to rest with all of this going on, Phyl.”

I will help you. Ask your friends to stay, then go to your bed. I will help you rest. When you awaken, you will be more refreshed than you have in a good long while. You will need the rest. The worst of this is yet to come.

“There's more?”

Rest, Harry.

Slowly, Harry's body became aware of itself again. He blinked several times to bring the room into focus and looked at Albus who was reading a book in a large overstuffed chair.

Bill was pacing. He looked over at Harry and noticed that his eyes were open. “Harry! Are you alright?”

Harry nodded. “Yeah, I think so. I'm just extremely tired.”

Albus' eyes twinkled. “I take it that your Phyl helped you.”

Harry looked into his own mind and saw the box. Then he looked at the headmaster. “Yes, she did. Lucius is trapped.”

Bill looked confused. “Trapped? What do you mean trapped?”

Harry pointed to his own head. “Up here. He invaded my mind while Phyl was training me. Now he is trapped. He can't leave until I release him. And I can't release him until Phyl gives me the ok. And

Phyl isn't going to give me the ok until she figures out the difference between a day and a century." Harry laughed.

Albus nodded knowingly. "Ahh, time is a difficult thing to master."

"I hope you two won't think that I am rude, but I need to sleep. Please stay. Make yourselves at home. Phyl said that I would feel better after I rested."

"Go on, Harry. We'll be here when you wake up." Bill said.

Harry stood up and swayed on his feet. Perhaps, my boy, we should escort you to your room.

"I'll do it, Albus." Bill took Harry by the arm and steadied him.

"I feel like such a weakling Bill."

"For Merlin's sake, Harry. You've just been through a traumatic ordeal. That is not showing weakness. Now come on. Let's get you upstairs."

"Bill, do you know where Ginny is?"

"Yes, I do. She is perfectly fine, and so is Miki."

Harry shook his head. "We've been married such a short time and it seems that Lucius has taken what little time we have had. First the volcano, and then my recovery now this. I wouldn't be at all surprised if she decided that it isn't worth it; that I'm not worth it."

Bill looked at him skeptically. "Do you really believe that she thinks that?"

Harry shook his head. "No, but she should."

"Feeling sorry for yourself now, Harry?"

He chuckled weakly. "Actually, yeah, I am. I'm tired of all this. Now I have to listen to the screams of a mad man trapped in my head. Tell me, Bill, do you know any other person that has to go through what I do?"

“No. But then I imagine that that is what comes with being Harry Potter.”

“I never asked for that, you know.”

“I know, and you are tired, things will seem better after you sleep.” Bill opened his door. “See ya later, Harry.”

“Yeah, goodnight, Bill.”

Chapter 56 – Wars and Wards

Draco studied his father from across the room. He watched as he writhed and whimpered. He simply watched with a victorious smirk on his face. It seemed that Harry was putting up a good fight. Draco only shook his head in wonder. Potter had done it once again. Draco didn't know how, but he had given Lucius Malfoy a run for his money. Of course Draco knew that once Lucius came back, if he came back, would be even more determined to get his hands on Potter. He just couldn't get it through his head that Harry was not a wizard to mess with.

Draco sighed and sat down at a table that faced the blonde wizard. He was looking toward the man on the floor but he was seeing his wife, very pregnant by now; he was seeing his friends. He missed them all. He missed his home. He missed, Hawaii, and he missed, Harry. He knew that after all that had happened, after all that he had taken from Harry, that there would be no going back. Even the great Harry Potter couldn't forgive him for all that he had done. He felt as guilty as Lucius; more in fact. Lucius had never made any bones about the fact that he hated Harry and wanted him dead. But him, he offered Harry the hand of friendship, no it was more than that, brotherhood then, then betrayed that bond. He knew that even after all he could do to get Harry out of this, that it wouldn't even come close to making up for what Harry had lost.

With another sigh he stared back at his father who was now lying stiff as death upon the floor of his room. Draco sighed and walked to him and nudged him with his foot. "Father?"

The man didn't move. Draco smirked. "Never underestimate the power of a pissed off Potter, Father. I'm sure I won't."

He took out his wand and whispered "Mobilicorpus" and floated the prone body of his father to his bed and left him there. He knew he wasn't dead, more the pity he thought.

Draco returned to his room and paced deep in thought. His father was not going to quit. He knew that much. If Harry defeated him in this, then there would just be something else. If there was one thing he learned over the years, it was that Lucius Malfoy was relentless. It

had to stop, and he knew that it was up to him to stop it. This had gone on long enough.

As he paced, one thought became crystal clear, Lucius Malfoy had to die. He wasn't sure how or when yet, he'd have to plan carefully, but it would happen.

&

Harry, wake up.

A small groan left his lips as the persistent voice of his mentor broke through the heavy sleep that he had managed to fall into. "What is it, Phyl?"

The human is trying to break out. He has put his fears behind him and is concentrating on escape. You need to strengthen the bonds and ward the box.

Harry was immediately awake and greeted by the Abraxan. Harry could feel his bonds beginning to weaken. He ran over toward the box and summoned more of the magical rods that he had built the box with. These were the red ones. He knew instinctively how to use them.

He wrapped them horizontally around the box in narrow intervals and watched as these rods, blended together to form a solid piece.

He looked at Phyl and the sleek head bobbed up and down in approval. Harry started to move away but she stopped him. *Harry, you need to ward the box. He is stronger than I anticipated. His mind is very ordered. That is why he was able to weaken the box so quickly. Ward it against magic but also against strength. He knows your powers and will attempt to use them to break free then attack you.*

"How do I do that, Phyl?"

Do you remember the golden cage that you created when you were fighting with Lord whats his name and you discovered that your wands are brothers?"

“Yes, but that won't work here. Lucius' wand is different.”

That is true, Harry. What we are going to do is something very similar however. I need you to picture that golden cage. She waited a moment for him to do as she asked. Now, I want you to say the incantation “Praesidium tutela obviam” then touch the ground where you want the ward to start. Then you are going to arc it to the other side and touch the ground there. You need to continue to do that until you have built a cage around the box. Can you do that, Harry?

Harry only nodded. He repeated the incantation and began building the ward piece by piece.

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Bill Weasley came up the steps of the castle and was drawn to Harry's room by a loud humming. When he pushed the door open, he saw the headmaster looking on in amazement as golden lines appeared in the air around Harry and his bed.

“What are you doing, Professor?”

Albus shook his head. “I'm not doing anything. Harry is. This, my dear boy, is a once in a lifetime experience. You will probably never again see wandless magic performed by a sleeping wizard.”

“What is he trying to do though?”

“These are very powerful wards. I would imagine that Lucius is finding a way to fight, and Harry is protecting himself and us.” They watched as one of the golden arcing lines came very close to where they were standing in awed amazement. Albus grabbed Bill's arm and pulled him back. “Don't let it touch you, Bill. Those are probably the most powerful wards I have ever seen. First of all, the fact that they are visible at all says something, wards are usually invisible like the ones around Hogwarts, and second, the fact that Harry is doing wandless magic indicates a great deal of power. A fly wouldn't be able to get through that alive.”

As Dumbledore finished speaking the golden cage was completed. The two men sat in chairs to guard against any unforeseen events.

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Very nice, Harry. You are a good student. Now, you may go back to sleep. I will wake you if need be. Your friends are with you, guarding you against harm and I will be here also. Sleep well.

Harry yawned. "Thank you, Phylestra." Harry returned to where he was sleeping and lay down again. He yawned once more and was asleep in an instant.

Chapter 57 – Lucius Returns

Draco Malfoy paced deep in thought. He had contacted the headmaster to find out exactly what was going on with Harry. After Albus explained, he told the headmaster exactly what was happening with Lucius.

After the conversation, he returned to his father's room to watch him. He answered questions that the Death Eaters posed about the well being of their leader. He assure them all that Lucius Malfoy was as strong as ever and that he was locked into the eternal struggle between his and Harry Potter's soul. He confirmed that, yes Lucius was still alive, and then performed the Cruciatus Curse on the unfortunate Death Eater that had the nerve to pose such a question.

That action alone had the desired effect. They left Draco alone. Now he would be free to plan without interruptions from Lucius' hapless minions.

He sat in the room, planning and watching. It was going on eighteen hours that Lucius had been unconscious and he showed no signs of waking.

Draco silently cursed his luck. He wanted to be anywhere but with his father. Watching the man struggle in what he now knew was a power struggle between him and Harry was about like watching grass grow.

He knew however that he needed to be there when his father came out of it, in a show of support that would rival everyone of the Death Eaters. He stood guard over the body of his father and kept the illusion alive that Lucius Malfoy was still in charge.

Two days later, Draco contacted Albus once again to get a report. There was nothing new to report. Harry was still sleeping and indeed hadn't moved in the slightest. Draco reported that it was the same with Lucius and broke the connection.

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Harry had been awoken by both the first vibrations in his bonds as well as the voice of his guide. *Are you awake, Harry?*

Harry jumped up. "The bonds. He's breaking them. How do I strengthen them, Phyl?" As Harry spoke the disturbance in the wards began to quiver alarmingly.

Phylestra was there with him, her voice calm. *Harry, let him break the bonds of the box. It is time for this conflict to begin. Harry, you will show only strength and confidence. Any sign of weakness will give him the upper hand*

Harry nodded his understanding and watched as the box began to vibrate and bits and pieces of it began to disintegrate. Then with a final explosion the box was gone in shattered shards that dissolved into nothingness.

Lucius smirked before he noticed the wards. "Well, Mr. Potter, your power is very impressive.

Harry never said a word, merely nodded his head toward his prisoner.

"Yes indeed, it is very impressive to say the least, Mr. Potter. I shall quite enjoy using your power after I destroy you."

Harry continued to say nothing as he circled the golden cage that still kept Lucius at bay. A secretive smile formed on his lips as he watched the blonde wizard study the golden shield.

He looked suddenly at Potter, and frowned. "Why is it, Mr. Potter, that I can't hear what you are thinking?

Harry remained stubbornly quiet but smiled at the imprisoned wizard.

"You are weak, Potter. Weak and puny."

"You are spending an inordinate amount of time, trying to conquer a weak and puny wizard, Lucius. I have the power to send you to hell. I could do it and not feel anything but the joy of your passing."

Harry watched a fear pass briefly over his rivals face then was quickly replaced with a hateful sneer.

“For all of your trouble. For all of your plans and schemes; for all of the years that you and your son spent in planning this revenge, look what you have gotten. Imprisoned and at the whim of the one you plotted against. That’s sad, really. One would think that you would have had at least some sort of success. Yet you haven’t managed to stop me in the least little bit. I still have my family. I still have my home. I still have my friends. I still have my power. But there is now one thing different; because now I have you as well. You are at my disposal. I can do with you as I please. It is a shame really. It must be very difficult for you to know that you have failed so completely.

Harry continued. “I not only have you, but I have your mind. As you sought to take my power from me, I now have access to all that you have. I know your thoughts and your plans. I know your secrets, Lucius.” Harry looked surprised at the last thing he said because he realized that it was true. He knew everything that Lucius knew while blocking any information flowing to the blonde. Harry laughed evilly.

“I am heartened to know that I am your biggest fear, Lucius. How wonderful to know that I have that power over you. How wonderful to know that you would sacrifice your son in a plot for revenge. Poor Draco, I almost feel sorry for him. Almost. He does after all have sway over his own actions and made the decision to follow you instead of his own instincts.

“I will give you that, Lucius. That your son gave up everything, to follow you and still you didn’t get what you wanted in the end. How sad.” Then Harry laughed. “I think that I shall leave you here indefinitely. Your body will die a slow death. Your son will watch you wither away to nothing, and finally, in the end, when there is nothing left, no hope of survival, I will release you to feel every agonizing pain that death will bring. I think I like that.”

Lucius said nothing but sneered at every word that Harry said.

Harry heard a whisper from Phylestra. *Harry, it is time to let him go. He will not choose this way to attack you ever again.*

“As you wish, Phyl. What should I do?”

Release the golden grid.

Harry smiled at his captive. "I give you your freedom, Lucius. I would advise you not to plague me any longer. If you do, you will pay dearly. It is as simple as that."

Harry didn't garner any statements from the man, didn't coerce him into fake promises. He just released the grid, turned his back on Lucius and walked away.

Lucius wasted no time. His mind traveled back to his body without a second thought.

Draco sat reading a book but looked up when Lucius gasped and opened his eyes. He put the book down and went to his father's side. He was pale and had the look of a caged animal. Draco helped him sit up and studied him closely.

"Draco!"

The name was croaked out in a raspy voice. "Water, and food."

"Yes, father." Draco left and returned quickly with the requested items and helped the older man sit at the table. "Are you..." But he didn't really know what to ask. 'Are you alright?' seemed ridiculous. Of course he wasn't alright. So he changed the question. "Are you able to drink by yourself, father. Or do you need assistance?"

Lucius took up the glass with shaky hands but managed to get it to his lips. After a few moments the older wizard looked over at his son. "I have to admit, Draco. I didn't fully trust you after you came back from being imprisoned at Hogwarts. But Potter confirmed that you were a traitor to him."

Draco kept his face carefully blank and answered. "How could I not be, father? I am surprised that you questioned my loyalty."

Lucius looked at his son. "I am sorry I doubted you, Draco."

"Were you able to do what you were trying to do, father?"

"No. I will have to try something else. Perhaps the simplest form of attack is the best answer to this situation. A battle. Harry Potter against me and my Death Eaters."

Draco smiled. "Yes, father."

"Draco, you know him better than any one else. Have you any suggestions? What does he hold dear that we can get our hands on?"

The young blonde appeared to be deep in thought, then looked up at his father. "His family."

"I have already tried that. They are...inaccessible."

Draco nodded, relived. "Hogwarts and Dumbledore."

"Also inaccessible. Isn't there a muggle orphanage that he is involved with?"

Draco began to panic but kept the emotions carefully in check. "Well, he used to work at the orphanage, but he hasn't in a long while."

"Isn't that where he got that brat he adopted?"

"No, he had a falling out with the curator. Mikeal was a private adoption." Draco knew that he was grasping at straws but didn't want to put Mrs. Lee and the children at the Residence Home at the center of Lucius' focus.

"Still, that may be a focal point that will most stab at him. I shall have to think about it." Lucius took a bite of the food and sat in silence as he plotted.

"Father, since your absence from us, I have sent spy's out to keep an eye on Potter. I need to have them report to me. If you will please excuse me, I will fill you in when I return. By your leave."

"You took control over my Death Eaters?"

"Yes sir. They needed a strong hand to keep them in line. For the most part, I kept them close. I only sent the strongest out."

Lucius leaned back and regarded his son. "I am impressed, son. Very impressed indeed. Is McMillan one of those you sent out?"

"Yes sir."

"Call him back. I would like to speak with him myself."

"As you wish father. McMillan was partnered with Parkhurst. Shall I call them both?"

"Parkhurst?"

"The newest among your followers, father. Recently graduated from Hogwarts. His parents were killed in the battle with Voldemort. Loyal to the bone."

"Yes, I should like to meet this young man. You did very well, Draco. Now go. I will finish eating and then attend to my followers."

Draco left his father's presence wondering how in the world he was going to shift the focus of the Residence home to something a bit more acceptable.

Chapter 58 - Discoveries

Harry Potter sat bolt upright in his bed a little short of breath and very thirsty. He looked around and saw Professor Dumbledore and Bill Weasley standing at the side of the bed, the former with a huge smile and the latter with a concerned frown.

“Relax Bill. I’m fine.”

“When the wards went down, I wasn’t sure.”

Harry smiled at Dumbledore. “I really need something to drink, my throat feels like a desert.”

The professor conjured up a pitcher of water then sat down and looked expectantly at Harry.

After he drank his fill, Harry quickly explained everything that had happened, during the standoff with Lucius, then smiled wickedly at them. “I doubt that I am going to have any trouble with him anymore.” Then he shrugged. “Well, at least he won’t be invading my mind any longer. Albus I need three things; my wife, my son and food, in that order.”

The two men laughed. “All right Harry. I will go and get your family. In the meantime, Bill, take this poor hungry boy down to the kitchen.”

Harry stood to go downstairs and swayed a bit. “You ok, Harry?”

“Yeah, fine. Let’s go find something to eat.” Albus apparated away and Bill and Harry went and raided the kitchen.

Within twenty minutes, Ginny was throwing herself into Harry’s arms and kissing him. Miki was standing back laughing with his arm around his Uncle Bill, and holding a wiggly pup that was bound and determined that he was going to get to the floor..

Harry pushed Ginny back gently. “Hey, where’s Mik?”

“I’m here, daddy.” The boy threw himself into his father’s arms and hugged and kissed him too.

Bill stood back and watched the happy reunion and quietly left the manor to the happy family.

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After he informed Ginny that she could return home, Professor Dumbledore returned to Hogwarts because he knew that Draco would be calling him. He didn't have long to wait.

"Albus, are you there?"

"Yes, hello Draco. Are you faring well?"

"As can be expected. Harry...?"

"He is quite well. Lucius...?"

"Absolutely beside himself with frustration. He is talking about attacking the Residence Home. I am going to try to dissuade him from that, but we need to have a plan in case that fails."

"Understood. Let me know as plans develop. Be safe."

"Yes sir. I'll be in contact." With that, Draco's head left the fireplace.

&

Lucius Malfoy prided himself on being unpredictable. In fact if one were to ask him, he would answer that that was exactly what had elevated him to the position he was now in. This matter would be no different.

McMillan and Parkhurst rushed to the private rooms of their master and McMillan reported that the family was currently ensconced in their castle with heavy wards around it. Parkhurst stood back, a bit in awe of the man in front of him.

"Well, Mr. Parkhurst. I hear great things about you."

He bowed to the blonde wizard. "As my master commands. I have only the greater good in mind."

"I see..." But Lucius was interrupted by his son, who stopped in the doorway and apologized.

"My pardon, father. I didn't realize you were engaged. I have some important news to report."

"Well come in, son. I believe that you know Reginold Parkhurst?"

"Yes sir. Hello Reg."

Reg nodded his head to the newcomer. "Draco."

They were interrupted by Lucius. "Draco, what is your news?"

"There have been Auror's spotted nearby. Bingham and Conte encountered them. Unfortunately they didn't survive the meeting."

In a white rage, Lucius screamed. "Damn Dumbledore and the Ministry of Magic. I will have them all. Draco, prepare the remaining Death Eaters for attack."

Draco bowed. "Yes sir." The young blonde's eyes widened slightly. "And what is the target, father?"

"The Orphanage. Let them anticipate that, if they will. I want the Death Eaters assembled at 6:00 a.m. If I know that bloody Gryffindor, it won't matter that he had a falling out with the curator. Once he gets wind of what is happening, he will be there. Parkhurst, your arm."

The boy held his arm out and Lucius touched his wand tip to the mark. The call went out and soon they all began to arrive. Draco had no time to warn anyone.

&

Harry was sitting with Ginny on the balcony looking out over the ocean. Miki was safe in his bed asleep and she was cuddled up to him, holding on to him tightly. She felt that she didn't dare let go of him.

"Why the death grip, Gin? I'm not going anywhere."

“I just feel like I need to hold onto you, Harry.”

Harry adjusted her so that she was lying full on top of him with her head resting on his shoulder. He fingered the light curls in her hair, kissed her forehead and then lifted her chin to kiss her lips.

That was when the call came. His eyes got wide and he gasped into her mouth. It took Ginny a moment to realize that he wasn't reacting to the kiss, but to Lucius's call.

“He's...he's up to something. Call Dumbledore.”

Ginny ran to the fireplace and threw in the flu powder. “Albus Dumbledore's office.”

But she was interrupted by a young man trying to contact the headmaster at the same time.

Albus Dumbledore's eyes twinkled. “My, my, so many visitors. Mr. Parkhurst, what has happened?”

“Headmaster Dumbledore, Lucius Malfoy is planning an attack on an orphanage.”

Ginny gasped. “Mrs. Lee's? Oh Professor. We can't let him.”

“I have no intention of letting the orphanage fall into his hands Mrs. Potter.”

Reg Parkhurst's eyes widened. “Mrs. Potter? Are you Harry's wife?”

“Yes, I am.”

“It is an honor to meet you. You will never know what your husband has done for me. His head turned in the direction of the headmaster. “Draco couldn't report, his father has him busy, but he asked me to inform you of the latest development.” His head turned, obviously listening to something happening beyond the room he was in. “Professor, I must go.” Within the blink of an eye, he cut off communication with the old man.

Albus looked quickly at Ginny who, he realized, had heard every word. With a sigh he looked at the girl. "My dear, Mrs. Potter, I must ask you not to inform your husband of this."

Her anger permeated the large office. "Draco is involved in this. How can you trust him, and how can you ask me to keep quiet about it?"

"I would trust Draco with my life, Ginny."

"Yeah, well Harry did too, and we know how that turned out."

"Do you trust me, Ginny?"

"Yes of course, but..."

"Then I must ask you to trust me in this and not inform Harry right now."

"I have never kept secrets from Harry before professor, and I'm not willing to start now."

"Even if it is for his own protection, Ginny?"

She was skeptical. "And how is it for his protection."

"If he knew, he would react differently. And we evidently need him at his top form, tomorrow."

Ginny thought for a moment. "Top form for what?"

"Well, of course there is no plan yet, but we must protect the residence home."

She studied her former headmaster, then sighed. "Alright, Albus. As long as you know that I do not agree with this, and that *you* will explain it all to him when it is time."

"Of course, my dear. Now, please inform your dear husband of the eminent attack tomorrow morning and have him flue me please."

She shook her head. "Yes sir."

Her head disappeared from Albus' fire and the old man shook his head. "I'm getting too old for this."

Chapter 59 – Becket's Defense and Avada Kadavra

Ginny hurried back to Harry who was gasping, his eyes wild. He held on to the balustrade with white knuckled intensity. Ginny put a protective arm around him. He stood for a long time, trying to control himself and his reeling world. With low comforting words, Ginny tried desperately to calm him, but nothing seemed to work.

Harry felt as if he were in two places. He knew that he was standing on the balcony with Ginny, but he was also just as certain that he was storming around the complex, watching black-robed vermin scurry out of his way. He had a smirk on his face as he watched his minions scamper like roaches from the light.

Harry turned to Ginny after a long time. There was fear in his eyes. "It would seem, that I am not as separated from that 'wart on the arse of humanity' as I would have hoped."

Ginny smiled at his witticism. "What do you mean, Harry?"

"I mean that I feel like I am in two places at once. I am standing here with you, but I am also aware of what Lucius is doing. It's like I'm in two different places at the same time."

Ginny was now alarmed. "He is still possessing you?"

Harry shook his head though. "No, that's not it. It's more like..." He struggled for a way to explain what he was feeling. Finally it came to him. "...When he called the Death Eaters together by using the Dark Mark, it's like there is still a thread of connection. One that I am aware of but he isn't. I think. I'm not sure."

Ginny was now worried. "He can't detect you?"

"I don't think so. If he can, he isn't acting on it right now." He sighed as the pain from the call lessened and the link seemed to fade. "They must have all responded. He isn't calling anymore and I'm losing the connection."

"Harry, I don't think I like this."

Harry shook his head. "Don't worry, Gin, I am pretty sure that this is something that I will be able to use to our advantage. If I know what he is up to, I will be able to react more quickly."

"Speaking of which, Dumbledore wants you to contact him. Lucius is planning to attack the Residence Home. He is planning a counter attack."

Harry nodded and went to the fireplace, bent over and put his head in, threw in a bit of flue powder and announced "Dumbledore's office." He felt the whirl of fireplaces blur by with nauseating swiftness and then slow as his head appeared in the headmaster's office.

"Albus?"

"Yes I'm here, Harry."

He watched the older man approach and sit in a chair.

"Harry, according to my resources Lucius Malfoy is planning an attack on the orphanage."

Harry nodded, "Yes, I already know. He is planning to attack in the early morning..." Harry's voice faltered here. "...Hoping to have the most devastating results possible."

Dumbledore frowned. "And how do you know this, Harry."

Harry quickly explained about the remaining link to a nodding and frowning headmaster. When he finished, Albus sat in thought for a long moment. Harry patiently waited for the reactions to what he had just revealed.

Then suddenly the headmaster stood up. "Harry, I believe that I had best gather the Order together and we will arrive at your Manor in a short while. You need to rouse the curator and get those children out of there as soon as possible."

Harry only nodded. He had learned in his short experience with the man that Albus Dumbledore was generally right about things. He

experienced a brief pang of regret that he still couldn't remember his association with him before.

"I'm on it, Albus. Do you think it will be safe to bring them here?"

"I think that is an excellent idea, Harry."

Harry nodded. "I'll be in contact."

Harry retreated from the green flames and ran back to Ginny. "I have to get the Residence Home evacuated. I want you to stay here. I'm going to be sending Mrs. Lee and the children here and you will need to help get the children settled."

Normally, Ginny would have argued but she knew that Harry could handle himself and that Mrs. Lee was definitely going to need help. She only nodded and kissed him quickly. "Be careful then, Harry. I love you."

Harry leaned into another kiss and whispered against her lips. "Ginny, I am putting an end to this once and for all. Lucius Malfoy dies tomorrow morning. That is a promise that I make to you."

"The only promise that I want from you, Harry, is that you will come home safely."

He smiled. "I promise you, Ginny. I will come home safely; and Ginny, you know I am a man of my word."

She smiled. "Yes I do."

With one last kiss, he apparated to Mrs. Lee's office. Luckily, she was there and alone.

He suddenly appeared in the curator's office and startled her out of ten years growth. "OH, MY GOODNESS, HARRY!"

"I am very sorry, ke kupuna wahine, but this is an emergency. We must evacuate the children to the manor."

Mrs. Lee stood and came around the desk. "What is happening ke moopuna kâne,?"

Harry quickly explained about Lucius and the impending attack, and that the Home was going to be protected by aurors but that the children needed to be gone.

"And ke kupuna wahine, I am sorry. It is my association with you that has brought this on you."

"Nonsense Harry, everyone makes their own decisions. Now let's get these children..."

But she was interrupted by an explosion that ripped through the building. The sudden mayhem and chaos that ensued spurred the two to action.

Harry ran out of the office with Mrs. Lee following closely on his heels. They were greeted by a gaping hole in the wall, children and adults screaming and crying.

The curator tried desperately to get the attention of everyone and restore a modicum of order, but no one was listening.

Quickly Harry took his wand out and pointed it at his own throat. "Sonorus. Children, come over to me."

Thankful for direction coming from a familiar source the adults led the children over to where Harry was standing. But Harry was looking at Mrs. Lee. "Grandmother, get the children out."

"What about you Harry?"

"I'm going out to meet the attackers."

"Not by yourself, you're not."

"Grandmother, I don't have time for this. Get the children out, now."

"You may have your very special powers, but you still can't do it alone, Harry."

He was getting frustrated now. "WELL I PRETTY MUCH HAVE TO, MRS. LEE, THERE IS NO ONE ELSE HERE." He closed his eyes and rubbed them and sighed before looking at the curator. He then continued more gently. "Grandmother, please get the children out now. I will be fine."

She looked at him, then lowered her head. "All right Harry. But if you get killed I will kick your halie butt all the way back to the mainland!"

He smiled and nodded then ran across the room to the hole. Looking out from the side of it, he could see black robed figures moving toward the building. He pulled back and made a quick scan of the room. The children and workers appeared to be safely out of the building. Without a second thought, he started throwing spells.

One by one, the numbers of the Death Eaters began to lessen. They had come not expecting any resistance and were sorely unprepared for an attack by Harry Potter.

"Impedimenta, Stupify, Petrificus Totalus, Turbatio, Garrio, Incendio!" The spells rolled off of Harry's tongue like silk. One by one, the approaching figures fell, but where one fell, it seemed that two took his place. He could hear the curses being fired at him. Most of them barely missing only because of the shielding spells that he quickly cast. Several of them had hit their target and Harry had blood running down his face. One of the curses split across his forehead and allowed blood to run into his eyes. He quickly healed the cut and wiped at the blood with his sleeve, smearing it across his face.

He was able to hold the Death Eaters at bay, but was having a difficult time cutting numbers down. That was when he saw him striding toward the middle of the battle with a smirk, that Harry could see from where he stood defending the Home. He would recognize that face anywhere. Lucius Malfoy.

He stopped in the middle of the open area and looked at his prey. "Well, Potter, it's been a while."

Harry smirked. "I'd like to make it a while longer. But we rarely get what we would like to have, isn't that true, Lucius? As for me I want you dead, yet here you stand."

"If you come with me, Potter, I will allow your precious Orphanage to remain in tact. If not..." He let the sentence hang in the air between them. The silence was deafening.

Lucius smirked as he watched the play of emotions on Harry's face. "Well? What is your decision, Potter? I refuse to wait much longer for your answer."

Then a smile crossed Harry's face. He raised his hand and thought "Levicorpus." Lucius was jerked off his feet and suspended in midair. "Windgardium Leviosa." Harry laughed as Lucius shot up into the air. Then all humor left him as he watched his quarry lower himself slowly to the ground.

"You are full of surprises, Potter. Wandless magic? Impressive, I must say. You know, now that I think of it, you would not have made a good Death Eater. You are much too powerful. I admit now that I was wrong. You are better off dead." Lucius drew his wand and pointed it at Harry.

Without another thought the wand swung around. Harry didn't hear the curse that hit the Home. He saw only another blonde wizard running at top speed toward the two of them. His wand shot up and he began again to shout curses this time at the younger wizard.

Lucius smirked as he watched his son run to attack Potter. Draco physically tackled his former partner, rolled and began firing curses at his father.

The rage on Lucius' face at the actions of his son gave away the reason that he began firing curses. Time after time rebounded curses bounced against the walls of the Home, weakening it more and more with each hit.

Finally in an ominous rumble, it came down. It showered rubble over them. They lay on the ground and covered their heads as stone and mortar rained down. Then the rest of the walls came down. Nothing was left but a pile of rubble.

Harry pointed his wand at Lucius and muttered a curse that he deflected easily.

“What are you doing, Potter? Simple curses aren’t going to kill him.”

Harry deflected several more curses from the Death Eaters who were now on the move again.

Draco fired into the mass of black robes as well.

“What in Merlin’s name are you doing, Malfoy? This isn’t...”

“Potter, down!”

Harry dropped and Draco fired several well aimed curses over his head that hit two Death Eaters dead on.

“Potter, it is a bit intense out here. Can we save the reunion for later please?”

Harry yelled a spell as Lucius raised his arm again. “Impedimenta!”

“And what reunion would that be, Malfoy?”

Draco continued to fire into the enemy line. “This isn’t working, Potter. Where in bloody hell is the Order?”

“How do you know that the Order...”

“Who in hell do you think told Dumbledore that this was happening?”

Harry’s eyes narrowed. “Then you bloody well know that they were coming in the morning.”

“And here I thought Dumbledore knew everything. Stupefy, Stupefy, Stupefy!”

“They are still coming, Draco.” Harry was watching the line move closer and closer.

Draco looked at the dark haired wizard. “Beckets Defense?”

“Neither one of us has done Beckets in years. We will probably burn ourselves to a crisp.”

“Impedimenta! It’s a good day to die, Harry.”

The two wizards stared at each other for a long moment then Harry turned his back on his former partner.

Draco did the same and pressed himself against Harry’s back. “Do you remember the incantation?”

“I think so.”

“You think so? Our lives depend on this, Potter.”

“You just do your part, don’t worry about mine!”

“This is so comforting.”

“Shut up and concentrate.”

Harry closed his eyes and willed his muscles to relax. He took a deep breath and he could feel Draco behind him. He could feel the approaching Death Eaters and Lucius. He could feel the air around him begin to get warmer.

“Now, Potter.”

“Not yet.”

“Potter...”

“Wait a moment.”

“We don’t have a moment.”

“Now!” They both raised their arms slowly in unison with each other. Harry began to mutter the incantation. “Ventus ex orbis terrarum , EGO accerso vos.”

A great gust of wind surrounded the two wizards with tornado like strength.

Harry and Draco stood in the midst of it with their eyes closed.

Draco took up the incantation. "Incendia ex orbis terrarum , EGO accerso vos."

A white flame leapt up and seemed to consume the two men in a shroud of misty white. Their arms continued to move slowly but Harry growled at Draco. "Too fast, slow down!"

As their arms raised directly over their heads, rainbow lights shot from their wands and surrounded the Death Eaters. Then each of them brought one arm down, Harry's right arm and Draco's left. They pointed the wands at the enemy.

It all seemed to happen at once. The fire gathered together, swirling in the wind that Harry called forth and it twisted together with the wind and seemed to grow in intensity the farther it moved away from the two controlling it.

"You ready, Harry?"

"Yeah, you?"

"Let's do it." Together they opened their eyes and yelled, "liberatio!"

The fire and wind that had seemed to be reluctant to leave its center suddenly broke loose and consumed all the Death Eaters. The screams were agonized and still the two held it.

They watched as the firestorm that they had created destroyed all in its path.

"Now, Harry?"

"Now."

"Incendia , EGO revento vos ex unde vos venit."

Harry took up the incantation. "Ventus , EGO revento vos ex unde vos venit."

The elements seemed reluctant to return to the two wizards that controlled them. It was sheer will, that forced them back now.

They stood there back to back, panting at the exertion, then collapsed to the ground. After a long while, Draco turned to Harry. "You still alive?"

"Yeah. You?"

"I think so."

"Good, 'cause now I can kill you."

Draco chuckled. "You haven't got the strength."

Harry knew the truth of what Draco said, but wasn't willing to concede the fact. "Yes, I have."

"Then go ahead, Harry. Give it one good Avada Kadavra. That will do it."

"Shut up."

They pulled themselves up and looked around. Where there had been hundreds of Death Eaters now there was no one. No trace that an attacking army had been there only moments before. Then out of the corner of his eye, Draco saw movement. He spun to face an enraged Lucius Malfoy.

"You traitor!"

Draco remained calm. "In order to be a traitor, father, I would have to had been on your side to begin with. I am happy to say that I have not been loyal to you since before you took Harry hostage." He raised his wand and pointed it at his father.

Lucius smirked. "You haven't the nerve. You are weak. Weak and useless."

"I am sorry you think so. Avada Kadavra!" Draco and Harry watched as Lucius sank to the ground with a look of disbelief on his face. By the time he hit the ground Lucius was dead.

The effort that it took to cast the killing curse was more than the blond wizard could handle. Draco dropped from the exertion.

Chapter 60 – Aftermath

Harry turned and looked at Draco, the shock written all over his face. “You killed him.” His voice was barely a whisper.

Draco only nodded and sat abruptly down on the ground. “I did it.” He said it more to himself than to Harry, amazement rich in his voice. He shook his head. “When it came down to it, he was right, Harry. When it came down to it I was weak.”

“How can you say that?”

They were interrupted at that point.

“That was the most amazing thing I have ever seen.”

Both men looked around and saw a Death Eater approaching. Instantly, Harry’s wand came up and trained on the newcomer but Draco reached over and pushed Harry’s hand down. “He’s with us.”

The Death Eater sat down next to the two of them on the ground and lowered his hood. Harry broke into a huge smile.

“Reg!”

“Hello, Harry.”

They shook hands.

“You are working for Dumbledore?”

“Yes, I’ve been working closely with Draco to keep the headmaster apprised of what was going on. Can you tell me what that spell was called? That was remarkable.”

Draco laid down, exhaustion completely taking over, then looked at the younger man. “That was Becket’s Defense. We learned it during our Auror training years ago. We have used it only once before. It isn’t something that you use very often. It drains a wizard of most of his power so you use it as a last resort. Merlin knows that this was a

last....wait a minute.” He struggled to sit up again and looked at Harry. “You remembered the spell! Have you got your memories back?”

Harry was staring at Draco as he spoke. All the hatred he had felt for his former partner warring with the realization that maybe Draco wasn't as bad as he thought. With a sigh he answered the blond wizard. “Some of them. I don't remember learning that spell. The incantation came from...I don't know where. Probably Phyl. I'll have to ask her.”

“You are telling me that we performed ‘Becket's Defense’ and you didn't know what you were doing? We could have been killed. Why didn't you say something?”

Harry shrugged. “I figured one way or the other we were dead. But if I was going to die, I was going to take them, and you, with me.”

Draco looked at Harry with a mixture of awe and disgust. The result was comical.

Harry shrugged. “It worked. What are you so upset about?”

“One of these days, your luck is going to run out. I just hope I'm not there to see it. It's going to be ugly.”

Harry lay back against part of the rubble and closed his eyes.

Draco closed his eyes as well but continued to explain the spell to Reg. “Essentially, it is elemental control. When you can control the elements, you have a powerful weapon. The really difficult part is the control itself. The elements tend to want to break away. You have to force it to do your bidding.”

“What was the rainbow light?”

That was pulling the power of light to dazzle the enemy. Did you notice that it got darker when it came to that part?”

Reg nodded. “Yes, it got so dark that I couldn't see my hand in front of my face.”

“That was because we were gathering up all light. Because it is nighttime right now, there was very little to gather. If you would have noticed, the stars seemed to blink out and the moon got considerably less bright. When we released the rainbow and it hit them, they were all blinded.” Then Draco sighed and lay back. “Reg can we talk about this later? I’m exhausted.”

Harry looked around at the devastation. “Come on, Draco. We have to find out what happened to Mrs. Lee and the children. They didn’t have time to get away and go to the Manor like planned.”

“Can’t. Just let me die right here. I couldn’t move if I tried.”

Harry attempted to stand but plopped back down. Reg put a hand on his shoulder. “Relax, I’ll check.”

Harry looked at his young friend, thankfully. “I would greatly appreciate that Reg. Watch out for Mrs. Lee, though. She doesn’t know you, you are likely to be attacked.”

Reg laughed. “I think I can handle one old lady!”

Harry and Draco looked at each other then back at Reg and laughed. “Good luck. You’re going to need it. I would suggest that you take the bloody robe off. The Aurors should be here sometime soon and I wouldn’t want you getting mistaken for a Death Eater.”

Reg did as Harry suggested and then quickly left and went to find where Mrs. Lee had taken the children.

Harry lay out on the grass because it was all he could do.

There was an awkward quiet between the two at that point. Draco looked at his former friend. He struggled to sit up. “Harry, now is as good a time as any. Let’s have it.”

“I’m too tired.”

“Then let me talk, you listen. I am sorry. I know it’s not enough, but for what it is worth, I am sorry.”

"You're right. It's not enough. You took more from me than you can possibly imagine. You not only took my freedom, my memory, my wife and my son from me, but you also took from me something that I valued almost as much as my family. You took you away from me; my brother. I don't care if that sounds corny so don't you dare say anything snide."

"I'm not saying anything snide, Harry. I feel...honored that you thought of me that way. Honored and very ashamed."

"No, you are not going to come waltzing in here, after all that you have done and get back into my good graces. I will never trust you again."

"Harry, you know that spell we cast? Becket's can not, under any circumstances, be performed with out trust between the casters. It is impossible."

Harry was quiet for a long time. "I still hate you."

"No you don't. If you did you would be walking away from me."

"The only reason I'm not walking away is that I don't have the strength."

"And you don't have the strength, because you performed a spell with me that calls for complete trust between the casters. So, we have come full circle."

Harry looked at the blond. "I still hate you."

Now Draco smirked. "Well, Harry, I wish you a long and healthy hate."

Harry crossed his arms in front of him and yawned up at Draco. "That's better. Where's Reg? He should have been back by now."

As if on cue, Reg rounded the rubble and returned to the two aurors.

Harry was laying on his back and looked up at Reg. "Did you find Mrs. Lee?"

The boy was pale. He nodded, but was so choked up that he couldn't talk.

Draco narrowed his eyes at the boy. "What has happened, Parkhurst?"

"Mrs. Lee, the workers and most of the children are fine."

"Most of the children?" The both chimed in.

Reg only nodded. "Draco, you need to go see Mrs. Lee."

Draco turned pale. "Nina." The name was barely a whisper on his lips.

Harry looked at the young man. "Reg, help him up. I'll be there shortly."

Harry watched as Reg hauled Draco up and supported his weight as they walked away. Then with monumental strength of will Harry raised himself to his knees and supported himself against a particularly large bit of wall section that lay in devastation next to him. It was then that he heard the familiar 'pop' announcing the arrival of a magical being. The aurors began arriving one by one. Harry let himself sit on the wall section and watched Tonks approach while she was looking around.

She looked at Harry. "Wotcher, Harry. Looks like we are a bit late. Are you all right?"

He smiled at her. "Hello, Tonks. I will be. Nothing that three or four months of sleep won't cure."

She sat next to him. "You want to talk about what happened?"

"Not in detail right now. I'm not up for it. But you should know that Lucius Malfoy is dead." He indicated the body of the blond wizard lying some feet away.

"You killed Malfoy? That's..."

"No, it wasn't me. It was Draco."

“Dra...he killed his father?”

Harry nodded. Then he looked at the purple haired auror. “Tonks, I think Draco may need some help. He is with Mrs. Lee right now. One of the children...”

“Say no more, Harry.” She stood and looked down at Harry. “Becket’s?”

He nodded. Harry watched her round the corner to go in search of Draco before he passed out.

He was out for only moments before he heard shouting and saw pieces of the wall floating harmlessly out of the way. Mrs. Lee was kneeling beside him coaxing him to wake.

“The children, grandmother?”

“It’s Nina, Harry. She got away from us. I am told that she saw Draco, somehow, and tried to get to him. Part of the wall collapsed on her.”

“Is she...” But he couldn’t even say it.

“No, she’s not. Your wizards are using their wands to move the wall sections. They uncovered her hand and it was moving, and we could hear her crying. Be of stout heart grandson.”

“Draco...he will...”

He is being put to use. He is holding her hand and talking to her. But he is in quite the same condition you are in.”

“He’s worse actually...” Dumbledore chose that moment to arrive and took in the devastation, his sharp blue eyes missing nothing.

“The healers will arrive shortly. Harry, are you injured? You are covered in blood.”

“No, Albus, I’m fine, but Draco...”

“I will go and check on him. Hello, dear lady. I am Albus Dumbledore.”

“So, you are the one my grandson talks so much about.” She stood and looked at the older wizard with a critical eye. “So, why was he left here to do this by himself?”

Albus Dumbledore’s eyes twinkled. “A very good question, my dear lady. It is one that I will endeavor to answer to the best of my abilities, though I fear that my answers will be lacking in strength and definitely will not be satisfactory. Alas, I made a mistake; a miscalculation on my part, not only left our dear Harry, here to face the intruders alone, but also lost you your home. For that I am deeply apologetic.” The headmaster bowed over the lady’s hand in deepest respect. “All that I can do at this point is to beg your forgiveness, and hope that you will allow me to try and right the wrong that has been done you.”

Harry just smiled and shook his head. He didn’t say it out loud, but he thought “*Why you old charmer.*”

After that he remembered nothing more.

Chapter 61 - Awakenings

Harry awoke, in a hospital bed, with the familiar Dr. Osbourne dictating to a quick quotes quill. When the healer looked up, Harry quickly closed his eyes and pretended to still be asleep.

The healer performed a few spells that revealed Harry's vital signs and turned to leave the room.

With a sigh, Harry sat up and looked around. Ginny was asleep in the chair with Miki laying on the floor next to her. With a smile he got out of bed and padded his way to his family.

He brushed a light kiss across Ginny's lips and squatted down next to her. "Hey, you."

Ginny's eyes fluttered open and she smiled. "Hey, how are you feeling?"

"Still tired but better. How long have I been here?"

She sat up a bit. "Two days. The healer said that you were just sleeping but I wasn't going to leave you to your own defenses. Not with this lot anyway. These are the same idiots that wanted to oblivate you."

He looked down at his son. "Is he ok?"

"Yes, he's fine. He has kept me apprised of how you were doing. He's pretty tired."

"Well, we can't have him sleeping on the floor. 'Mobilicorpus.'"

Harry levitated him to his bed and covered him up. Then he returned to Ginny and pulled her up into an embrace then sat in the chair pulling her with him. "It's not our balcony at home but it will do for now." He kissed her forehead.

"I have questions, Gin."

"Ok, fire."

“Nina?”

“She will be fine with time. It was touch and go there for the first twenty four hours. She kept slipping in and out of consciousness. She was in a muggle hospital, but Draco wouldn’t hear of it. He told all the nurses and doctors that they weren’t to touch her with their fumbling hands. Then he had her moved here.”

“Here? But...”

“I know, Harry but she is doing well with the healers treating her. Draco hasn’t left her side. He hasn’t slept yet either and I’m a bit worried. Even Moira isn’t able to get him to listen to reason.”

His eyes narrowed. “Is that so? Lead me to him, the stubborn git.”

“He is easy to find. He is right next door. I’m going to stay here incase Miki wakes up. You go see if you can talk some sense into him.”

Harry opened the door and stepped out into the corridor. He stopped a young medi-witch just before she entered the room. He looked at her name tag and gave her his most flirtatious smile. “Maryellen, is it possible to get Mr. Malfoy’s bed moved into the room with his daughter?”

She blushed. “Oh, hello, Mr. Potter. It is good to see you awake. I ‘m not certain if I can do that. They generally don’t like to put adults in with children.”

“Oh, but if you do, we will finally be able to get him to sleep. I will personally promise you that he will sleep. How about that?”

“Well, I’ll have to get it approved, but I really don’t see that it will cause too much of a problem.”

“Good, good. Now, can you get me a cup of tea and some sleeping potion. You and I are going to see to it that Mr. Malfoy gets the sleep he needs.”

“Oh, but we have tried to get him to take a sleeping potion. He won’t touch anything.”

"I will get him to drink it. You just get it for me."

With a wave of her wand, she produced a tray of tea and scones and a vial of sleeping potion. Harry uncorked the vial and poured it into the steaming liquid. He produced another cup of tea for himself, took the tray and handed the vial back to the young witch.

"Now, just give me some time."

He backed into the room with the tray in hand and set it on the table. He looked at Draco. "You look like crap, Malfoy."

"It's Nina, Harry."

"I know, Dray. Hello, Moira. I didn't know you were here."

She smiled. "Harry, maybe you can talk some sense into this idiot. He refuses to sleep. He acts like..."

But Harry held up a stifling hand. "Moira, you don't understand. Nina is his baby. He feels like he has lost valuable time with her and doesn't want to waste a moment."

Draco looked up at Harry. "Finally, the voice of reason!"

Moira looked at Harry in mortified disbelief. "I can't believe that you, of all people would condone this foolish..."

Harry winked at her. "Now, Moira, leave the man alone." Harry reached around for the tray. "Here Draco. I brought you some tea. Moira there is another cup here for you if you want it."

"Thank you, Harry."

"C'mon Dray. I understand your not wanting to leave her, but the least you can do is try to keep your strength up. You've been through a lot, in the last three days, and you look like crap, like I said before. Your hair is all dull, there are big black circles under your eyes and you look like a bag of bones. Very unbecoming, for a Malfoy."

Harry produced a third cup of tea and looked at the two year old in the bed. "How is she Draco?"

"She hasn't been awake since I got her here."

"Is she not responding to the healer's magic?"

"They say she is, but she hasn't been awake. I just don't know." He set the cup of tea down and adjusted her covers around her."

"She'll be fine, Draco."

"Thanks, Harry. Can I ask you something?"

"Sure."

"Do you ever get used to it?"

Harry knew exactly what Draco was talking about. He was thinking about the battle, the wounded and the dead.

"No."

He sighed. "Good. It wouldn't do to be complacent about life. Look at my baby here. She is so young and yet, I may lose her. That isn't something that I want to take for granted. I should have listened." He looked at his wife. "I should have listened to Moira, to you, to Ginny. I just should have listened. I just couldn't make myself subject her to...but in the end, it didn't matter. She still may..." His voice faltered and caught as he fought to stifle the tears that were threatening to fall.

Moira stood. "Draco, it's all right." She stood behind him and massaged his shoulders. He reached up and patted her hand and leaned his cheek against it. He closed his eye momentarily but jerked himself awake again.

Moira frowned. "Draco, you are dead on your feet. Please, get some rest."

"I can't, love. I'm afraid that if I do, something will happen to her."

She sighed. "Well at least drink the tea that Harry brought you."

“It’s stone cold by now.”

Moira reached around him and touched her wand to the rim of the cup. Immediately steam began to rise from its depths again. She handed it to him. “Drink.”

He put the cup to his lips and took a large swallow. “Thanks, Harry.”

Immediately the cup began to droop in his hands and Moira caught it just before it fell to the ground. Harry prevented Draco from slumping forward in his chair

Moira smirked at him. “He’ll never trust you again, you know.”

“Yeah, he will. Sometimes it is amazing to me how easy it is. Go open the door, the Medi-witch should be out there with Draco’s bed.”

Moira hurried across the room and invited the young lady in. She smirked at Draco’s slumped form and looked at Harry. “You should be a Medi-Wizard. You are very good.”

“Nah, all that blood...?” He gave a fake shudder.

She took a miniaturized bed out of her pocket and set it on the floor. She waved her wand and the bed began to grow to normal size.

Then she pointed her wand at Draco. “Mobilicorpus.” And Draco’s body floated to the bed and settled gently on the mattress. Moira went over and pulled the blankets up over her husband.

“Thank you, Harry.”

He smiled. “Any time, Moira. You just haven’t had as much experience dealing with the git as I have, that’s all. I’m going back to my family. If you need me, I’m right next door.”

At Moira’s nod, Harry turned, and left the room.

Several hours later, Moira knocked on Harry’s door and Ginny got up to answer.

“Oh, my goodness! Harry, you have a visitor. A couple of them as a matter of fact.”

Moira walked in carrying Nina in her arms. “She wanted to say hi to Uncle Harry and Aunt Ginny.”

Harry held out his hands to her and she went to him right away. He looked up at Moira. “Where’s Dray?”

“Practically in a coma. He put off sleep for so long after the battle, that the healer’s don’t know when his body will rejuvenate enough to allow him to wake up. Thank you again, Harry.

Miki sat watching the adults quietly, then looked at Nina, then back to Harry. “Daddy, are you gonna ‘dopt Nina too?”

“No, mate. Uncle Draco and Aunt Moira are.”

“Oh. Can I go see Uncle Dray daddy?”

Ginny looked at her son. “Uncle Draco is sleeping, Mik. Can your visit wait?”

He rolled his eyes. “Mum, this is Saw Man business.”

“Don’t you roll your eyes at me, young man. You may be a Shaman but you are still my son and you will treat me with respect.”

He hung his head. “Sorry, mum.”

“Moira, do you mind? Generally if he says it is Shaman business, it is important.”

“Oh, well, no, of course not. In fact I will take him. Come on, Miki, let’s go see Uncle Draco.”

They watched Miki leave with Moira and Harry shook his head. “Just a few short days ago, I couldn’t stand to be in the same vicinity as Draco. Now look.” He looked up at Ginny. “It’s time to call Paddy back!”

A slow smile spread across Ginny's face. "I'll do it as soon as we get home."

Harry leaned back against the raised mattress of his hospital bed and gently pushed Nina's head down. "There now, angel, go back to sleep." But her head popped back up. "Wan da."

"I know, baby. Soon enough."

Harry's hospital door flung open, and there stood an enraged Draco, wand in hand and Miki trailing behind. "You are the biggest hippogriff's arse that has ever walked this planet, Potter. Sleeping Potion? How dare you?"

Nina's eyes lit up when she saw Draco and held her hands out to him. "Da da da da da." She tried to wiggle out of Harry's arms to get to Draco. He stopped yelling and snatched up his daughter.

Harry was unfazed by the ranting of the wizard. "It was for your own good, Draco."

"And who are you to decide what is for my own good, Potter?"

"Who am I? Who am I? I am your brother. We're family, Draco. That's what families do for each other. We have the other's well being in mind."

"I...Oh...well, bloody hell!"

"Uncle Draco! Mum says that's not good to say. You're gonna get in trouble like Uncle Ron did."

Draco chuckled. "Sorry kid. Merlin knows I wouldn't want to do anything like Uncle Ron did."

Harry snorted, Ginny laughed and Moira just shook her head.

Draco looked back to Harry. "Ok, you're forgiven. Just don't do it again."

“Don’t worry, I won’t.” Then under his breath said, “Not unless the situation warrants it, that is.”

The door swung open again revealing a very frazzled, Healer Osbourne. “Are you people never where you are supposed to be?”

Harry chuckled. “We are always where we are supposed to be. But where we are is rarely where people expect us.”

“Huh?”

Draco looked at Harry, then cracked up. He turned to the healer. “Osbourne, don’t try to match wits with Harry, you’ll loose every time, and don’t try to understand him. I’ve been trying for years and I am no closer than I was when I first met him.”

Harry looked at the blonde. “Thank you, Draco. Coming from you, that is high praise in deed.” Harry turned to the Healer. “When do you think we can get out of here?”

The man threw a clip board into a chair. “Not soon enough! I’ll send a medi-witch in to check you out of here, and please do me a favor; stay healthy, and don’t darken my doorstep again.” He turned and stormed out to raucous laughter.

Chapter 62 - Breakthrough

"Harry, do you see the door?"

"Yes."

"Can you get through it now?"

He smiled. "Yes, I can."

"Good, good. Now open the door."

Harry's hand moved as his mind lead him through the door.

"What do you see, Harry?"

Harry's head swiveled on his neck. "It's different. It's...beautiful, actually. Rolling hills with wild flowers everywhere."

"Are you sure that this is the same door that was blocked before?"

"Absolutely sure."

"Excellent, Harry, excellent. Now, look around you. Do you see anyone?"

Again Harry's head swiveled as if looking around. "Yes, in the distance."

"Can you see who it is?"

"No...not...wait a minute. I can kind of see." He was quiet for a few moments. "It's Lucius Malfoy." The name came out in a sneer.

Paddy looked at the room's other resident, then back at Harry. "What is he doing, Harry?"

Harry's hand whipped out. "Immobulus!"

A whispered voice addressed the hypnotist. "He can do wandless magic. If you are going to continue this line of questioning, then you had better stay out of the way. He is very good at what he does."

In Harry's mind he stood and circled the blond wizard that now stood unable to move. "Well, Lucius, you have troubled me for the last time." Harry waved his hand. "Finite. We will have this out here and now, Malfoy. Draw your wand."

But the imaginary Lucius didn't draw a wand. It surprised Harry, when he attacked with only his hands around the younger wizard's throat. Very quickly, Harry began to gasp for breath trying to pry the ever tightening hands away. It wasn't long before he was on his knees struggling to breathe.

"Harry, can you hear me?"

But he didn't answer. He had become so engulfed in the imaginary battle between himself and Lucius Malfoy, that all other sensory perceptions were cut off.

"Harry, answer me. Can you hear me?"

"Do something, you're the expert here! He's dying."

But with a wave of the hand the other wizard sat back down but never took his eyes off of Harry.

"Harry, Lucius is not real. He is already dead. He has no power over you. You are your own master. Do you remember, Harry?"

The room's other occupant stood and began to pace, then turned to watch Harry begin to slump toward the floor.

Then he hissed. "Merlin! Bloody hell, Brannigan, do something!"

Then he went over to Harry and picked him up and put him back in his chair. "Harry, don't do this. You can't let him win now! He's dead! I killed him. You saw me kill him. Harry, listen to me. Please!"

The moment that Draco had touched him, he began to breathe a bit easier. In his mind's eye he was watching Draco as he battled Lucius, who had now become a dragon.

After a few moments Harry joined him. The battle raged for what seemed like hours. He and Draco fought side by side all past ills behind them; united against a common enemy.

Harry's eyes flew open but were still glassy from the hypnotic trance, but he took Draco by the shoulders. "You killed your own father...for me?"

Draco looked helplessly at Paddy who only nodded his head. "Yes, Harry. He deserved to die. He was evil, and yes, I killed him."

"No one should have to kill their own father. I'm sorry, Draco."

Draco rested his forehead against Harry's. "It had to be done, and you know it."

Paddy came up to Harry. "Harry, I'm going to bring you back now. I want you to go to your tree. You are calm and relaxed. One, concentrate on breathing in and breathing out. Feel the air slowly fill your lungs, relaxing you. Two, you know that you have the power to defeat any problems that you may have. Three, you are slowly waking up. Come back to the library, now. Open your eyes."

When Harry opened his eyes, they had lost the glassy far away look that had been there only moments before. He looked at Draco whom he still had hold of. Then quite unexpectedly he pulled Draco into a hug.

"You killed your father, for me."

Draco nodded. "Yes, but let's not get maudlin about it. Geez Potter, you are hugging me."

Harry chuckled. "Get used to it Malfoy, it's what families do."

Draco pulled away slightly but not enough to break contact. Harry still had his hands on his shoulders. His voice was barely above a whisper. "Merlin, Harry, I am so sorry; about everything. After what I did to you, you still consider me a brother? I don't deserve that."

“That’s just it, Draco. Whether or not you deserve it, there it is. That’s what families are. I can’t say that I will forget everything that has happened. Only time will take care of that. I may even get snarky with you from time to time; but that doesn’t mean that I don’t love...”

Draco’s eyes got wide and he pulled away, obviously uncomfortable about where this was going. “Ahh Potter...”

Harry rolled his eyes. “Not like that you pratt, geez! It doesn’t mean that I don’t love you as a member of my family. It just means that I can’t stand the sight of your ugly mug any longer.”

Draco’s eyes narrowed. “Ugly? Ugly! I’ll have you know, Potter, that I was voted the most handsome Slytherin in my last three years at Hogwarts.”

Harry shook his head and mouthed along with Draco as he ranted. He had been on the receiving end of this particular tirade more than once. He let the blonde finish then smirked. “You are such a girl.” He turned to the older man. “Paddy, can we continue this tomorrow?”

“Of course, Harry. I expect that...”

“I am not a girl, Potter!”

“Well, quit acting like one. Go on Paddy.”

“Well, I expect that...”

“I’m NOT acting like one.”

Harry turned to Draco with a smirk. “Look at you. You are actually pouting! Girl, through and through.”

“I...”

“On second thought, no, you aren’t acting like a girl. That would be an insult to Ginny and Moira. You are acting like a baby! That’s it, a baby.” He turned back to Paddy with a chuckle. “You were saying, Paddy?”

Paddy, who was by now laughing at Harry's baiting of Draco, waved his hands in the air. "I'll let you two settle this little spat. Then I'll continue. Go ahead."

Harry turned back to Draco with a smirk. "Very well then. You were saying...?"

Draco straightened himself up and looked down his nose at his dark haired rival. "This argument is beneath me. I'll talk to you later when you have come to your senses." He walked up to the older man. "Sir, it has been a pleasure. I look forward to seeing you again. Good evening to you." Draco turned from Paddy, stomped on Harry's foot and ran from the room laughing."

"Ow! Bloody hell, Draco, you'll pay for that." Then he started laughing. "Sorry, Paddy."

Paddy was laughing too. "That is quite alright, Harry. It is good to see. I'll call on you again tomorrow, same time, if that is alright?"

"Perfectly."

"Good. I was going to tell you to continue to keep the notebook. I have a feeling that we have turned the corner in your treatments. It won't all come at once, but it will come."

He walked Paddy to the door and waved as he left, then went to his bedroom. He walked out onto the balcony and stared out at the ocean. He realized that he hadn't felt this light hearted for as long as he could remember. He didn't know how long he stood there, but his thoughts turned to Ginny. The one who had been there for him no matter what. The person he loved beyond all reason. His rose..."

"Wait a minute!" He said this out loud. Then walked slowly back into the room and looked at the crystal vase with the barren rose stems. He closed his eyes and relaxed as he allowed the memories to come. "Our wedding night!" He opened his eyes again and picked up one of the stems and felt his heart begin to race.

With a smile he laid the stem down and cupped his hands together. As he pulled them apart, a perfect rose appeared, black as the ace of

spades and as fragrant as any flower had a right to be. He shook the rose to test the petals and was gratified to find that they stayed perfectly in tact.

An hour later, Ginny and Moira returned from their visit to Moira's medi-witch. The baby was due soon and they were keeping a close eye on her condition.

As they walked up the steps, Ginny saw a white rose laying on the steps. She picked it up and sniffed it with a smile. As they walked in the entry hall, a yellow rose lay on the floor. Ginny looked at the stairs up. Every other step had a different color rose leading her.

"Moira, get Miki for me if you would."

Moira smiled and she had tears in her eyes. "Go to him, Ginny."

Ginny slowly ascended the steps, picking up the gradually darkening roses as she went. When she entered the bedroom the crystal vase was stuffed to overflowing with black roses.

She laid the flowers down and picked a single black rose from the vase and slowly walked out onto the balcony. Harry stood there leaning against the balustrade and smiled when he saw her.

"I didn't think you were ever going to get back."

She had tears in her eyes. "You remembered?"

Harry only nodded his head and she ran to his open arms. The kiss they shared heated up the night.

Chapter 63 – Epilogue

“Madam Pomfrey, please do something for her!”

The healer rolled her eyes. “Mr. Malfoy, I am doing everything for her that I can. She is fine. This is normal. Now, please, sit down. All you need to do is sit there, hold her hand and wipe her forehead. Other than that, please, let me do my job.”

Draco! Stop...arguing...with...Madam...Pomfrey! AHHH.”

“Moira, love, please try to...”

“Don’t you even lecture me on how to give birth. I’ll reach down your throat and rip your heart out.”

“Moira, love...”

“Don’t! And if you ever touch me again...AHHH...” She panted with the effort of her labor.

He heard a snicker come from the side of the room where Madam Pomfrey had her back to them, putting items on a tray.

Draco sneered at the woman’s back. “That’s enough out of you!”

“Just leave, Draco, before I make you regret living! Madam Pomfrey, get this baby out of me, NOW!”

The door squeaked open and Draco looked up hopefully at the newcomer. “Oh Ginny, thank Circe.”

Ginny smiled at the distraught blonde. “Draco, why don’t you go out and keep Harry company, and leave the women stuff to the women, ok?”

“But Moira...”

From the bed where she labored to bring the child into the world she growled. “Draco, go. NOW. I don’t want you here!”

Ginny walked him to the door of their bedroom and whispered. "When she gets closer, I'll send for you. You shouldn't miss the birth of your son. Harry is in the library waiting for you..."

"AHHH."

Both of their heads swiveled toward the young woman struggling in the bed. Draco started to go to her but Ginny stopped him. "Draco, I will watch over Moira, you go check on Nina."

"But..."

She looked at him sympathetically. "Go. I'll send for you."

With a defeated sigh, Draco left his bedroom in the manor and stopped in Nina's room to make sure she was sleeping. To his surprise, she was wide awake. She was sitting up in her crib rubbing her bright blue eyes. As soon as she saw Draco she held her arms out to him. "Da."

He picked her up and pulled her close to his chest. "Hey, princess. You should be sleeping."

She settled into Draco's arms and went immediately back to sleep. He sat in the rocker with her and just watched the little face in dreams. After a long while he laid her back down and went to the library.

Harry was sitting there reading a book and looked up when he came in. "You look like crap."

"Well, it's a match set because I feel like crap." He threw himself into a chair and stared into the cold fireplace.

"Moira's going to be fine, Draco. Women have been bringing children into this world for forever."

Draco sneered at him. "Let's see how you react when it is Ginny that is struggling."

"You're probably right. Do you want a drink?"

He nodded his head absently and Harry shoved a small shot glass containing a brilliant blue liquid into his hands. Draco looked at it, then up at Harry. "What is this stuff?"

"It's a liqueur that Albus gave me. It's pretty amazing stuff. But it's really strong, you should just..."

Draco downed the shot glass in one gulp and immediately his eyes started to water and he began coughing. He shot out of the chair gasping for breath then looked accusingly at Harry.

"Sip it...Geez Draco, are you trying to kill yourself?" Harry shoved a tumbler of water into his hands and laughed.

Draco downed the water and sat down again.

The two sat in companionable silence for a while, Draco staring into the room at nothing in particular and Harry reading his book.

Then Draco turned to study the dark haired wizard as if trying to figure him out.

With a sigh, Harry closed his book and decided to get the conversation that they had not had yet, over with. He stood up and poured himself a shot of the blue liqueur. He had his back to Draco as he took a swallow to steady his nerves. He knew that this was not going to be pleasant. He returned to his chair and looked at the blond. "You did a good thing, Draco. Because you are rebuilding the Residence Home the kids will have a great place to live; better than before."

Draco shrugged his shoulders. "It's no big deal, I've got the money and the kids need the home. It doesn't take a genius to figure that one out.

"I'm also glad that you are finally adopting Nina. She loves you a lot, you know." Draco nodded but said nothing.

The two men were quiet for a while then Draco broke the silence. "I don't deserve this."

Harry's brows knitted together. "What do you mean?"

"I mean, Harry, that I don't understand *why* you would, or *how* you could, for that matter, put aside...everything..." he stood up and threw his hands in the air. He continued in a much lower voice. "...just everything."

Harry was quiet for a while. He took another fortifying drink then he leaned forward with his elbows resting on his knees. He wasn't looking at Draco. He suddenly had tears in his eyes that he tried to hide by standing up and looking out the window at the predawn sky. It took him a while before he could speak with a steady voice.

"I don't pretend, Draco, to understand why or how you could have done what you did. I don't understand how you could take everything away that I held dear. I don't understand what I did to deserve being treated that way. There are still things that I am struggling with...most of it, in fact."

He turned and looked at the other wizard. "If I were to be perfectly honest with you, it is a struggle for me to be in the same room with you at times."

Draco's eyebrows knitted together. "Then why...?"

Harry held up a hand. "Let me finish. This whole thing with you coming back to live here is purely selfish on my part. You've heard the saying 'Keep your friends close and your enemy's closer'? Truth be told, I haven't figured out which one you are yet."

Draco hung his head as he sat in the chair. "I'm sorry, Harry. Merlin, I am so sorry."

"I'm not telling you all of this to make you feel guilty, Draco. I'm just trying to tell you where I am coming from. And you didn't let me finish. The other side of me wants to have things the way they were. That's completely stupid and unreasonable, I know, but..." Harry's voice shook with emotion that he struggled, unsuccessfully, not to show to the blond. "I know that that will never happen."

It took Harry a minute to compose himself enough to talk. He looked at Draco. "Can you explain any of this to me? Can you make it make sense? I would really like to know. I still don't have all of my memories. Maybe I never will. I want you to explain it to me. Were you under the Imperious Curse? Did he threaten your life?" Harry threw the glass he was holding across the room splattering the remnants of the blue liquid over the walls. "Tell me Draco. Tell me how you justified this to yourself."

Draco was quiet for a long time. Then he looked up at his friend. "I have no excuses, Harry. There is nothing to tell you except that I was a coward."

Harry interrupted him. "No, Draco! That's not good enough. I want to know what you were thinking. I want to know what your justification was." Harry stood in front of him and grabbed him by his shirt and shook him in anger. "I want to know, why." Then he pushed the blond away from him and Draco stumbled back a few steps.

"I wish our relationship had never changed. I wish I still hated you like in school. I wish I could still relish beating you and rubbing your face in it..."

Draco's eyes got wide and he looked at him. "Ahh...Harry."

"I want to beat you at Quidditch and revel in the feeling."

"Harry...?"

"Merlin, that was the greatest feeling in the world."

"Harry!"

He started pacing in his rant. "I want to steal your House Elf again." He looked pointedly at Draco and waved a hand at him. "You know, the look on your father's face was a rush."

"Harry!"

"I want to punch you in the face like Hermione did. Buckbeak didn't deserve to die, and you knew it. You were just an evil git."

“HARRY! Will you shut up and listen to me? Do you realize what you are saying? Do you remember all of those things?”

“I...” He stopped and stared at Draco, and then a slow smile spread across his face. “Merlin, I...I remember it all. I remember the first time I saw you at Madam Malkins.” His eyes got wide. “Hagrid! Ron! Hermione! Snape!” His eyes looked distant as he looked into his memories of those people that he cared about. It was suddenly like a dam burst. Vision after vision assaulted him. He couldn’t have stopped it if he had wanted to.

His breath was coming in gasps and he was overwhelmed by the emotions, he allowed Draco to lead him to a chair.

“My first time on a broom...” He looked up at Draco. “You were picking on...Neville!” Then Harry smirked at him. “It was always you! You were an evil git! Geez, what a jerk!”

Draco shook his head. “Well, come on, let’s have it. Get it all out, Potter, because this is the last time you will get the opportunity. Bring it on.”

Harry’s eyes narrowed. “Oh! Is that true? Well I’ve got news for you, you sodding, barmy tosser, I’ll yell at you when I want, as long as I want, and what’s more is that you will take it. You got that?”

Draco snorted. “In your dreams, Potter. Come on, is that the best you’ve got? What a whimp!”

“Whimp? Whimp! Did a whimper defeat Voldemort?”

“Geez Potter, how long are you going to play the Voldemort card. You killed him. He’s dead. We both know it. Merlin’s beard, the whole world knows it. Play a different tune will you. You’re boring me.” Draco purposely egged him on, hoping that the flood of memories would continue.

“I’d like to know where you’d be if I hadn’t killed him. Probably dead! You’re such a bastard!”

Draco looked at him. “No, but I wish I was!”

“You...huh?” Harry stood there with his mouth open.

“Oh, now there’s an attractive pose. Close your mouth, Potter. Fly’s are gathering.”

“Maybe, but if you notice, they are all on your side of the room.” Then Harry began to chuckle. The chuckle grew into a laugh and the laugh turned into a guffaw. Soon both of them were practically helpless with laughter. Harry had tears in his eyes and he hung on Draco so he could remain standing.

Draco wiped his eyes. “Harry, what are we laughing at?”

Harry shook his head. “Haven’t a clue!”

“Ok, just so that I know.”

They were interrupted by the door squeaking open. Miki entered and had Nina by the hand. “Daddy, you in here?”

Nina was rubbing her eyes. “Da?”

Draco went over and picked her up and cuddled her.

Miki went to Harry. “Daddy, mum says that Uncle Dray needs to come.”

Draco looked up from his little girl. “Moir! Harry...”

“Give her to me, Draco. You need to be with your wife.”

About an hour later, an exhausted Ginny came into the library. “Well, at 5:03 a.m. Noah Draco Malfoy made his appearance; and I’m tired. Do you mind if I go catch some sleep for a while?”

He kissed her forehead. “Can you hold on for just a minute, Gin? I have something to tell you. I think that I actually fell in love with you in the Chamber of secrets. But at twelve I wasn’t sure how to handle it.” He stopped talking and let what he had said sink in.

With a smirk, he watch realization dawn on her face.

She kept her voice carefully calm. "Harry, does that mean that you...remember?"

Harry only nodded his head.

"Everything?"

"Everything; well I think everything. Of course, I wouldn't know would I? I mean if I didn't know that something was missing..." He suddenly had his arms full of his wife.

Ginny spread kisses across his face.

Harry laughed and spun her around. He couldn't remember, ever being this happy.

The End (138,782 words, 412 pages, 63 chapters)

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A/N: To all of you who made the journey, I thank you. There are those who thought the story too long. To those I say, the journey was planned out before the first word was written. I could have rushed the story, but then I wouldn't have been true to my characters. The true impact of the story would have been lost. The moral is that the human spirit can withstand many things if one would only allow forgiveness and love to dominate them. We will all be richer for the experience with very little to regret. I would like to say a very special thank you to ProfessorChris. She has been with me from the beginning of the story and has brightened my day with her comments. I also thank everyone that took their precious time to read my little offering here. Dean's Darling.